

The Bluegrass Bulletin

published expressly for members of
The American Bluegrass Society

by
The Bluegrass Bookshelf

PETER A. RICHARDSON

POST OFFICE BOX 487, 102 SEFFNER STREET, SEFFNER, FLORIDA 33584

TELEPHONE AREA CODE 813, 689-1164

archie #5
see page





Ralph Stanley

This issue is dedicated to RALPH STANLEY.

"Old Joe Clark"

(Round - Round - Ole Joe Clark)

Arr: Peter Richardson

"G" Tuning

Handwritten guitar tablature for "Old Joe Clark" in "G" tuning. The piece is written in three systems, each with a 6-string guitar staff. The first system contains 16 measures, the second 16 measures, and the third 16 measures. Above the staves are fingering and picking instructions: "I" for index, "M" for middle, "T" for thumb, "P" for pick, and circled letters for barre positions. Numbers 1-3 indicate frets. The piece concludes with a "REPEAT WHOLE THING AGAIN, etc., etc., etc." instruction. A bracket labeled "O-G" spans the first two systems.

OLD JOE CLARK goes on, and on, and on, and on, as long as you care to play it.

Chorus: "Round, round, Ole Joe Clark, Round, round I say,
Round, round, Ole Joe Clark, I'm goin' away."

Verse: "Ole Joe Clark had a cat, wouldn't sing nor pray,
Stuck his head in a buttermilk jar, washed his sins away."

Verse: "Ole Joe Clark had a house, sixteen stories high,
Every room in that there house, filled with chicken pie."

Many, many verses, varying in different localities of the country.

5/15/2 - 901 810"

(Round - Round - Ole Job Class) 70

ATT: Peter Richardson
"G" Tuning

๑๖

Hi Bluegrassers,

Let me begin by relaying to you a complaint that I have received with some frequency. (That means I receive the complaint a lot.) It is just this: Many, many of you wrote asking to publish your names for purposes of exchanging correspondence whether on tape or written letters. Now, We have many of our members who have written to those wanting to correspond and an answer has never been received. These have been the type of letters which we want, friendly and on the subject of Bluegrass. Why you no answer your mail, huh? I would suspect that you who have received letters feel that perhaps you are not as good on your instrument as you should be or as you would hope to be and don't want to appear dumb or something like that. Let me assure you that you are not going to get a critical analysis of your playing ability from answering the correspondence. Sure, there are some who are so frustrated that they hold their playing "Secrets" as highly valuable to them and don't wish to tell anyone how to achieve this or that sound, and perhaps sell you down the river because you are not as adept as they. BUT, TRUTHFULLY, these idiots are rare and actually shouldn't exist. But when we study these personalities we find that playing the Banjo or Guitar or whatever has been the one big accomplishment of their lives. This being the case, they falsely assume that if they share their secrets with you that THEY LOSE SOME BIT OF VALUE AS HUMAN BEINGS. So, they guard it with their very lives and perhaps poke fun at you because you don't know what they do. Also, they probably spent more hours at learning than they would have to spare if they were working steadily as you probably do. Therefore, the people who have lodged this complaint of not answering their letters are not these frustrated know-it-alls. I know them (at least most of them) rather well. GET TO YOUR OVERDUE MAIL AND ANSWER IT TONIGHT!!! You will be richer for it and you may find a real friend.

I receive some mail that is not anything more than argumentative junk. I suppose that everyone emotionally upset has an ax to grind and the Editor of the Bulletin is far away geographically and will do for the purpose of "blowing their stack". They don't necessarily blow their stacks about the Bulletin or the Bookshelf, but on Banjo, Bluegrass and performers generally as if I were responsible for all of the inconsistencies in life. I spend so much time answering people's gripes about life in general that I have little time to get to something worthwhile. Why do you not write to record companies who are the real culprits to a great degree or try breaking a few Banjo strings, taking a cold shower, taking a lick at the punching bag and try being a little more friendly? I am not asking for any type of applause, accolades or the like, but I have spent much paper and tape corresponding with those of you who are really depressed about your Banjo work and life in general. I don't mind this sort of thing at all, but I think I have a lot more to offer you as a friendly instructor than I have as a father confessor or a psychological therapist. I would enjoy greatly a few more (or lots more) reports on stage shows and the like which would benefit all and they would take up more space in the paper. I told you many times before that the Bulletin would be just about what you helped make it. We have had a few writers give us some splendid material, how about a bit more of this type thing. And too, some of you gripe about the

GRIPE MAIL - Continued-

amount of space the Bulletin takes up with Special offers from the Bookshelf. By and large and almost consistantly, the grippers have been those who have used the Special offers the most. How this makes sense I will never know. There would be no Bulletin or no Society if it were not for the Bookshelf. In light of these facts it is certainly reasonable to assume that you would want to take advantage of purchasing instruments and supplies at cut rates. What are we asking for, the right to eat our cake and keep it too? I will entertain any logical gripe about the Bulletin or any other thing we are responsible for, but when you say I like the specials but don't advertise or tell me about what is available - well, how does one resolve that? (Don't bother to answer that question - it is the rhetorical type which has the answer built into the question.) Now, one can ignore such illogical letters, but I would rather spell it out and deal with it - everyone is entitled to an answer to his questions and I have done my level best to give them to you. I am the type of person who will sustain (take) a slap in the face and still give you credit where it is due - I don't hold grudges or judge you for your unkind actions. I have been told often "Richardson, you are a sap for letting people read you the riot act and continue to treat them like friends". I truly appreciate the compliment, but this is the way I am made, and I couldn't be any different regardless of what happens to me. Actually, the Bluegrass Bulletin began life as the Banjo Bulletin and it was mailed to all who had purchased my books free of any charge whatsoever. It became what it is today as a result of your suggestions that it be an organ for a society or club of people interested in the subject of Bluegrass. As such, it has to have an infancy before it grows to full maturity. The suggestion was that the Bulletin be a subscription type thing and it became that. It has lost money (that is, it has cost me personally to keep it going). Now, if you want it to be something better it could use your own blood in transfusions. My words are no great bargain, so how about some of your own. We received some very good, witty and informative articles sent in some time ago and we printed them. We received some nice compliments on them too. It is certainly not out of the question to ask you for more. I could cite the names of people who have given us tablatures and interesting bits of news, but you can find their names by looking at the back issues of the Bulletin. Don't take these good natured people for granted without a dim thank you. Show your greatfulness by giving them, and the Bulletin a hand. We want YOUR letters which share news, tips, etc. The gripes about little or nothing at all of substance we can do without - and your blood pressure would be much more normal if you would stop looking for things to bug you so that you can react with hostility. Now the linen is out to air and I am glad that I have undertaken it, and I hope that YOU are also! (About Tablatures - I cannot take the time to turn them into tablatures like mine, so If you send them in either give them the same treatment I do or explain your markings, but do send them. Sharing tablatures and news bits and tips with fellow bluegrassers is worthwhile and befitting a good friendship. Lets get together as we should from this day on. Best regards, Pete Richardson.

A FEW SHOW DATES AND PERSONALITIES SO ENGAGED

- August 12 - The National Old Time Fiddlers Convention. This will be held at Galax, Virginia and will continue on through the 13th (Friday and Saturday).
- August 14 - The Osborne Brothers will be at The Shiloh Dude Ranch Maryland.
- August 15 - Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys will be at the Manassas Virginia Fair.
- August 16 - Jim and Jesse will be at the town of Kermit, West Va.
- August 17 - Same clan - Jim and Jesse will be performing at Pineville, West Virginia
- August 18 - (once again) The Virginia Boys with Jim and Jesse will be at Olive Hill Kentucky and THE OSBORNE BROTHERS will be in Jacksonville for a show(Jacksonville, Florida - where else???)
- August 21 - Granddaddy Scruggs and Lester Flat will be at Sunset Park in Winchester, Virginia.
- August 24 - The Osbornes will be in Atlanta, Georgia.
- August 26 - The Osbornes will be in Greenville, S. C.
- August 27 - The Osbornes will be in Knoxville, Tennessee, Jim and Jesse will be in Monroe, Michigan.

Some other groups are playing in other areas, but we do not recommend them as top rate shows.

- August 28 - The First Annual Pennsylvania Bluegrass Festival with a number of top-notch artists will be held at Ontelaunee Park, Route 143, New Tripoli, Pa. The Stanley Brothers will be there with Mac Wiseman, Reno and Smiley and whoelse?---- Bill Monroe.
- August 31 - Jim and Jesse (Allen Shelton plays Banjo) will be in Greenville, Tennessee.
- September 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, there will be a Bluegrass Music Festival in Roanoke, Virginia. Lots of good talent here!

That should give you somewhere to go to hear some good Bluegrass. BUT - I HOPE THAT THOSE IN YOUR HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD ARE HEARING SOME GOOD BLUEGRASS FROM YOUR HOUSE ! (And tell your wife that you are not supposed to use that mute - Let the Banjo ring out for all its worth)

IMPORTANT NOTE

EFFECTIVE september 1st, The Officers of the Society are as follows: President: David Teeter, Vice President: Carol Ann Gawle, Editor and Manager of the Bulletin Pete Richardson. These two officers are knowledable and dedicated to Bluegrass - we should experience some good articles, tabs and promotion from Dave and Carol. I'll keep plugging along with the Bulletin as best I can.

THE STANLEY BROTHERS have an excellent and well managed Fan Club. Fay McGinnis is the President and the address is 1156 - 21st St., Wyandotte, Michigan, 48192. They put out an extremely well produced Journal or Club Magazine. Dues are \$1.25 yearly and I would certainly recommend and admonish that you become a member. I know that the majority of the Fan Clubs are not managed this well. My hat and that of the Bookshelf is off to The Stanley Brothers Club.

Letters to the Editor (Continued) (Norm Carlson's letter continued from previous page).....

But the surprise and treat of the show was many times national champion old-time fiddler, Clayton McMichen. It is a long time since he was lead fiddler with the Skillet Lickers, but he shows marvelous talent yet. He did mostly waltzes and slow numbers. He did an outstanding job with "Bile Them Cabbage Down" which he said he wrote. He also stated, although it may have been a joke or exaggeration, that he won the national fiddle championship 18 times with it. Another number he fiddled which he said he wrote was "Peach Pickin' Time in Georgia" which he said he had fiddled on the original Jimmie Rodgers recording. It is pretty hard I find, to get to talk with the performers at these shows. I did manage to get acquainted with Birch Monroe, Bill's oldest brother and manager of the Jamboree. He is very taciturn but he did say they were raised on a farm near Rosine Ky., on which they raised corn, wheat, and tobacco. He said he has recorded with both Bill and Charlie, but never with them together in the Monroe Brothers days. One of Charlie's numbers he mentioned having helped with is "Better Be Somewhere Praying"..... Last fall at the Brown County Jamboree I was privileged to hear Birch fiddle and sing with Bill and the Blue Grass Boys on some old-time and gospel numbers.

SPECIAL NOTICE!!!!!!

Anytime Bluegrass and Old-Tyme music is gaining the spotlight for any worthwhile reason, we should as a group and as individuals endeavor to give aid. I am asking all members of the American Bluegrass Society to lend a hand with the following: Send to Mr. Archie Green, Folklore, University of Pennsylvania, The Graduate School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19104 anything in the way of recordings, publications (books and manuals song books, etc) to aid the John Edwards Memorial Foundation in a serious academic study of old-time music. This is the type of thing we should be interested in helping along if we remain true to our original objective. Whatever you have that you think would help this study should be sent to Archie Green.

ANY PHONOGRAPH RECORD, ALBUM OR WHATNOT WHICH IS STILL IN PRINT CAN BE ORDERED FROM THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF. THEREFORE, IF YOU CANNOT SEEM TO FIND THE RECORD ANYWHERE WE WILL GET IT FOR YOU IF YOU GIVE US THE NUMBER OR THE TITLE OF THE RECORD and/or ALBUM. WE HAVE ACCESS TO ALL MAJOR AND MINOR RECORD DISTRIBUTORS, AND WE WILL GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT IF THE RECORD IS STILL ACTIVE(still being pressed.) Many of the publications of this type state that they cannot obtain the records for their readers or members., WELL, we CAN! It is a lot of trouble to get a maze of labels, but we don't mind making the effort for the membership. (Other publications and clubs could also do it if they wanted to expend the effort.

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE RECEIVING RADIO WSM FROM NASHVILLE, TRY IT AFTER ABOUT 9:30 P.M. At that time the signal travels farther and daytime stations which might interfere with the signal are off!

THE AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY
P. O. Box 487
Seffner, Florida - 33584

HERE IS YOUR AUGUST BULLETIN



Mr. Archie Green
"Folklore"
University of Pennsylvania
The Graduate School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

The ^{by} Bluegrass Bookshelf

POST OFFICE BOX 487, 102 SEFFNER STREET, SEFFNER, FLORIDA 33584
TELEPHONE AREA CODE 813, 689-1164



"HAPPY SCHOOL DAZE"

Bluegrass and Folk Fans: It is that time again - Let us begin with a few words of introduction to DAVE TEETER, New President of the ABS - Dave is an excellent 5 String Banjo player, Guitarist, and Mandolin performer. I believe he would rate himself as best on Banjo among the three, but it is good that he has the versatility that he does enjoy, as president of the society, he will have some words of advice, tips, questions for all of us to consider and a few tablatures here and there. BELOW IS AN OPEN LETTER FROM DAVE TEETER TO ALL OF US:

To the Members of the American Bluegrass Society:

As you saw in the last Bulletin, I am now the new president of The Society. I am very glad to be president, but I also know the obligations and responsibilities of being an officer. I will begin my term and end my term as president with the knowledge that I am doing and have done my best to fulfill these obligations. Carol Ann Gawle, The New Vice President, will do an equally hard job.

By the end of my term, I hope the Society will be sufficiently organized to hold elections of officers. I also hope to have over 200 members in the society by next September.

My main hope for the Society is to find some way to get the professional Bluegrass musicians to join the society. We must find a way. At present we have several professionals in our organization, but we need more. We should be able to satisfy the needs of both amateurs and performers on the professional scale. Ideas. That's what we need and in the worst way! Send in any idea you may have relating to this problem.

Every month I will be a contributor to the Bulletin in some way or another, and I, personally think that all members should try to write and contribute to the bulletin. Size is not important. Just write!

I will be more than glad to answer any questions members may ask me as long as they relate to Bluegrass. Members should send in any questions they wish answered in the Bulletin; we will try to answer them.

Please join with me this year in making the American Bluegrass Society really something, let's give it some prestige!

Thank you,
DAVE TEETER

WE ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO AID THE CAUSE OF BLUEGRASS AND OLD TYME MUSIC WHEN WE CAN. We are including in this issue of the Bulletin an application blank for membership in the Stanley Brothers Fan Club. The Society nor the Bookshelf is associated in any financial way with the Stanley Brothers Fan Club and we are doing this only as a favor to the club and to those of you who wish to join. We do, however, endorse this fine club and the periodicals they issue.

A LETTER FROM OUR ROVING REPORTER NORM CARLSON

Dear Pete,

I really enjoyed the latest Bulletin. I'm glad to hear that you and Keith Tyler got a Dobro Book done. I have been writing to Keith and exchanging tapes for a few years. I visited him last summer and found he is a wonderful fellow.

I was pleased to see you dedicated the issue to Ralph Stanley and also was pleased with your endorsement of the Stanley Brothers Fan Club of which I am Indiana representative. I am enclosing a few membership blanks that you can mail out with the next Bulletin if you care to.

I have another show report here if you can use it. AUGUST 14th ARTHUR SMITH appeared at the Brown County Jamboree, Seanblossom, Indiana. He put on an enjoyable and varied performance of his characteristic bluesy fiddling and singing and fast old time tunes. He seems to have changed a little since his Bluebird records were issued. I was able to meet him and speak to him briefly.

Also on the program was an impressive local bluegrass band. Elvin Rooks and the Bluegrass Ramblers (Elvin Rooks - Guitar, Wilford Deaton - Banjo, Jim Strong - Fiddle, Oakly Turner - Mandolin, and Ron Pots - Bass) make up a spirited and highly authentic band of real country people playing real country music. Later on the program part of this band played and sang with Birch Monroe for some old-time fiddle tunes and Gospel songs.

Yes, the Moore Brothers band I reviewed before uses an ELECTRIC BASS. (Editors note: HORRORS!!!!) Although I personally think Bluegrass should be kept totally non-electric as a matter of principle, still it sounded alright. American Bluegrass Society members are some of the most fanatic purists around and I'm glad of it. Only by having hardnosed traditionalists at the Bluegrass roots can we prevent wholesale Nashvilleization of country music. So don't make it sound like I committed a crime. I didn't play that electric Bass, I just reported it. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

NORM CARLSON

EDITORS NOTE: Ok, O.K., Norm and you are a good reporter too. You also keep up the good work; we appreciate it. And too, about Electrification of instruments and inclusion of other electric instruments like a "Steel" ---- Although it is certainly not traditional or pure, some Bluegrass Bands do employ electric instruments as back up when recording some songs of a particular type in a studio. One outstanding example of this type of GOOD WEDDING OF NON ELECTRIC AND ELECTRIC WAS one by THE OSBORNE BROS. The particular tune I am referring to is "Fair and Tender Ladies" which was put out some time ago (on MGM I believe) as a 45 rpm single. (The flip side is a perfect example of excellent back up or seconding on the 5 String Banjo by Sonny. The tune is "Mule Skinner Blues". This is a good single and in one of their albums also I believe. HEY, SONNY, YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY HOW ABOUT TALKING ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING FOR ALL OUR BENEFIT?

The following "article", "story", or whatnot is the work of one of our more contemplative members. LINSON BROWN is a college student who has a bit of a flair for writing and has provided us with this bit of work that he whipped off before retiring one nite.....

"FRINGE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN
BLUEGRASS SOCIETY" By Linson Brown ABS 007

(The James Bond of the ABS - He
really has card no. 007)

"Nice way to get sunburned... Pause long enough to have lunch with me?"

"I have already eaten, thanks."

"But as a representative of the "Welcome to Florida" committee I feel it is my duty to see you are well cared for."

"The life-guard has assumed that responsibility."

"Yes, but the lifeguard has to work 'till dooms-day; or there 'bouts."

"Dooms-day is at sundown. He's off duty then."

"My Corvett can cover a lot of ground in one afternoon."

"I prefer to use the life-guard's Jaguar.....less expensive to operate."

"Well, we could go to a little Greek resturant in Tarpon Springs, and afterwards to a secluded island where we can watch the sponge fleet return."

"In marine biology at the University I was required to spend three weeks at sea collecting sponge specijen. I have had it with sponges!!!"

"Well, I would love to show you Florida from the air. We could rent a plane and....."

"My boy friend, the life guard, usually lands his Father's companys' amphibian near the beach while on duty. Would you like to see it?"

"Oh, well.....Have you heard the newest Bill Cosby records. My apartment is not far, and I own the largest collection of Bill Cosby...."

"Thanks, but it's getting late and I have an early date on the first tee."

"I-M-I"

"What?"

"Ch,...Index, Middle, Thumb. When you mentioned "Tee" I automatically thought of the TIMI roll used when playing Banjo. Thumb, Index, Middle, Index."

"Banjo? What has Timi to do with playing the Banjo?"

"Not Timi; that's a girl. TIMI: half of an eight stroke roll."

"What?"

"Never mind now. Come to the beach often and you will be sure to see me when I am practicing."

"Do you have a Banjo at your apartment you can illustrate with..?"

"What about the life guard....and the early golf date?"

"You don't need a life guard when playing golf!"

#007

EDITORS NOTE: Quite good, but I must warn you that you could break a lot of strings that way!!!!

"ARTIST" & agents.

- An Editorial -

(Your comments on editorials are invited and responsible answers which can be printed - pro or con - will be published in Letters to the Editor.)

This is an age of a semi-styled ARTISTS. The word ART has been literally crucified by the madison avenue agents, advertisers and by those unscrupulous characters who call themselves agents but are inwardly ravening wolves exploiting a youngster who might or might not have enduring talent. If a young person or a group of young people who want to "make it" in show business are all too often forced to sign ridiculous contracts which makes the agent rich and provides the "artist" bits and pieces - loose change so to speak - that will allow him to buy the expensive clothing he needs to "perform" and perhaps a little more to polish his vanity but not enough to lace his bank account or adequately line his pocketbook.

Therefore, we have today a host of young people in Bluegrass and Country and Western - just as we have in the "rock" field, who are exploited for the present "market" - whatever it is that the public likes at any given moment. When the "market" dies, the "artist" also dies - at least he is no longer needed so he has in effect "died" to the world of performance. The agent lives on - and how - as all he has to do is take the pulse of the public and locate among thousands of youngsters anxiously waiting for "a chance" the particular type for the particular performing need.

All of this leads me to say this: If something is "art" it is needful of artists to perform that art. If all of the youngsters who felt they had this artistic ability were given a chance to show their efforts under consistent standards (the same conditions as in studios and with the same instrumental back-up) the world could make or decide who were artists and those who did not get public reaction would know for themselves that they did not have it. But this is not the case in 1966 and it hasn't been that way for a long, long time. We have created the AGENT who is not an agent. We have made the psuedo-agents- the wolves of Madison Avenue that do all of the deciding FOR YOU AND FOR ME. Most of us don't even realize it either - and this is the real crime. We think whoever is put on TV or RADIO or is PRESSED ON RECORD are the REAL ARTISTS. THIS IS A FARCE AND A LIE - A BIG FAT LIE. Those on the records TV and Radio are MOST OFTEN (in about 90 percent of the cases) only those who would stand still for taking about 5% of the profit from their PERFORMANCE. The rest - those who go back home to the mountains or the seashore or wherever they came from - these are the bulk of TRUE ARTISTS. Their Bluegrass Music is often much more representative of Traditional Bluegrass than is that which you hear out of High Fidelity Stereo Record Players - records that have had all of the coarseness filtered and re-filtered out so that each second of playing time is perfect. They even take out minor slips of the hand which wouldn't amount to a 5th of a second and you - as hearer - listener - never realize it. THEREFORE, the ARTISTS IN THIS REGARD ARE THE A&R MEN OF THE RECORDING COMPANIES, AND THE ELECTRONICS TECHNICIANS AT THE CONSOLES IN THE STUDIOS. The guy with the Banjo on his knee and the girl with the Classic Guitar are only means to an end - that end - a buck for the Agent, a million for the Record Company - peanuts for the "artist".

PETE RICHARDSON

The Bluegrass Bookshelf

AN EXCELLENT
INSTRUCTION MANUAL

PRICE: \$4.98 PP

PRESENTS

Bluegrass

and Folk

Guitar



BY ROBIN SCOTT

THE CUMBERLAND GAP

Arrangement is by Peter Richardson, Arrangement copyright 1965

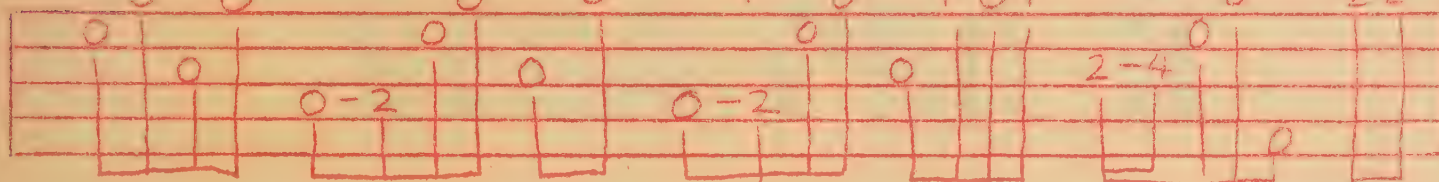
G tuning = from first string to 5th = D-B-G-D-G

Low break is relatively easy but the high break is difficult to work out - LOTS OF PRACTICE ON HIGH PART IS NEEDED HERE.

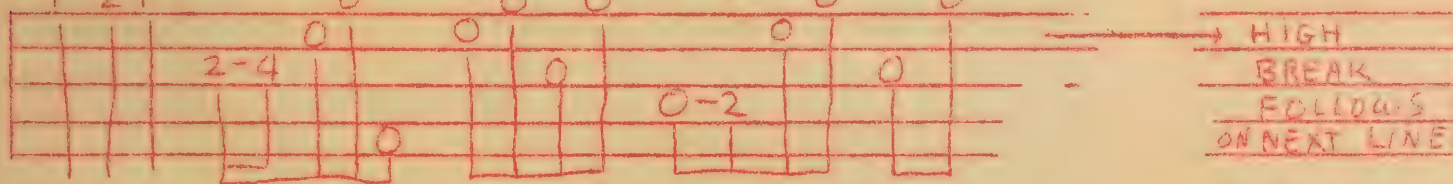
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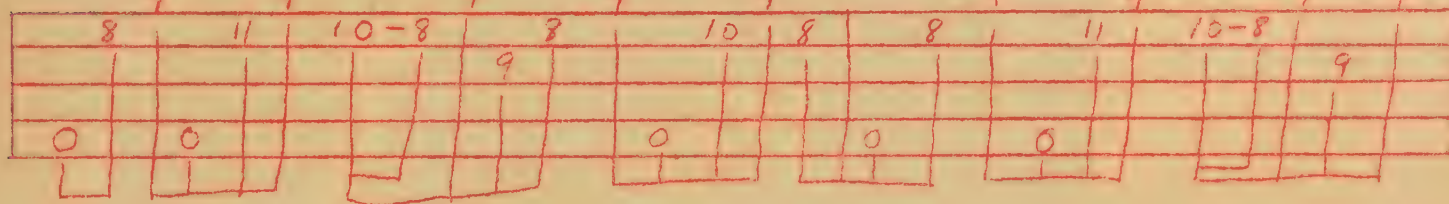
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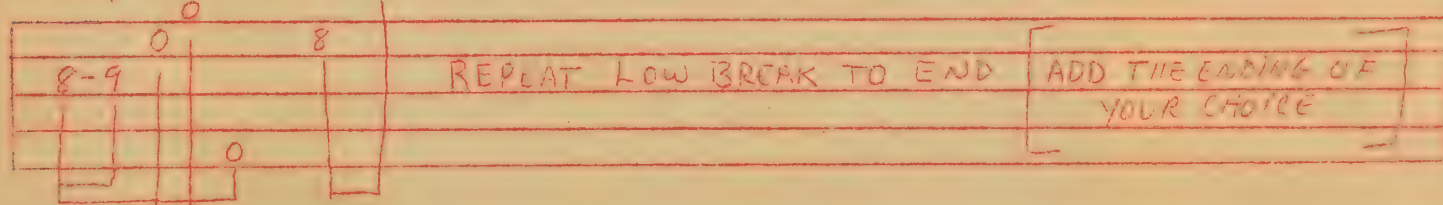
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"a truly wonderful banjo" says

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(OSBORNE BROTHERS)

TV, RECORDING and PERSONAL APPEARANCE STAR

about his

VEGA PRO II



"I've had many compliments about my Vega Pro II from fans all over the country. All agree it is beautiful to see and beautiful to hear - a truly wonderful banjo."

AND REMEMBER

These stars too play Vega banjos...

Pete Seeger
Mike Seeger
Eddie Peabody
Allen Shelton
Kingston Trio
Limeliter
Highwaymen
and most other folk,
country-western stars
everywhere

How about YOU??

PAGE FIVE - THE BLUEGRASS BULLETIN - SEPTEMBER 1966

HOW ABOUT A FEW SPECIALS FROM THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF??

TRY THESE FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER - The prices are good only till the last day of September.

1. Earl Scruggs Banjo Strings (VEGA) \$4.80 for three sets (that is three sets for the price of TWO).
2. Set of 4 Planet Pegs for Banjo (if you know what these are you know this is a special price) Set of 4 - \$20.00.
3. Original Scruggs-Tuners per set \$37.50 (set of two)
4. Pin Bridge for Flat topped Guitar, made of Rosewood with Bone Saddle - \$1.00 (reduced 50¢).
5. Wall mount for Banjo or Guitar \$1.30 (50¢ off regular price)
6. Tuning pitch pipe for Guitar \$1.00 (reduced 25¢)
7. AUTOHARP (new) \$55.00 (reduced \$5.00)
8. TONE, finger ease, for spraying strings of Nylon, steel or gut Stringed instruments. Makes action faster and helps keep fingers from getting sore. \$1.00 (reduced 50¢) (spray can)
9. GUITAR STRINGS, Nylon for Classical Guitar \$2.00 per set)Reduced 70¢)
10. GUITAR STRINGS, Black Diamond \$1.85 per set(reduced 25¢)
11. GIBSON DOBRO or Hawaiian Guitar Strings \$2.75 (reduced 30¢)
12. VEGA-PITTMAN 5th STRING CAPO \$6.25 (reduced \$1.00)
13. GIBSON Mandolin Strings \$4.75 per set (reduced 55¢)
14. GUITAR STRAP \$3.00 (reduced \$1.00)

We feel that we have offered you some excellent specials this month- if you do not think so - try buying the same items elsewhere for this price or less. We are also in a position to extend you a very nice trade-in price on a new VEGA BANJO or ARTIST GRAND GUITAR.

FOR EACH NEW MEMBER YOU SECURE FOR THE
AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY DURING SEPTEMBER
YOU WILL RECEIVE \$1.00 WORTH OF CREDIT TOWARD
PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES FROM THE BOOKSHELF. BE
SURE TO HAVE THE NEW MEMBER SAY WHO YOU ARE
WHO RECOMMENDED THAT THEY JOIN AND WE WILL
CREDIT YOUR ACCOUNT WITH \$1.00 TOWARD PURCHASE
OF SUPPLIES, BOOKS, LESSONS. GET WITH IT!!!!

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF
AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 487
Seffner, Florida 33584

HERE IS YOUR SEI TENDER
BLUEGRASS BULLETIN



10A

3/27

Archib Green
440 W Bedgwick, Apt 216-C
Philadelphia, Pa 19119

The Bluegrass Bulletin

published expressly for members of
The American Bluegrass Society

The Bluegrass Bookshelf

PETER A. HENNINGSON

POST OFFICE BOX 487, 102 SHERIDAN STREET, GAINESVILLE FLORIDA 33504

TELEPHONE AREA CODE 811, 699-1164



HAPPY HALLOWEEN TIME

Hi Bluegrass and Folk Fans,

Since it is nearing the time of ghosts and that sort of thing, you might work out an arrangement of "Ghost Riders in the Sky" or "Long Black Veil" or something like that - you would, of course, have to use a lot of minor chords and such to obtain the flavor you need, and when the kids came around for a hand-out, you could tell them you will serenade them with your Banjo - then cut loose with those minor chords and watch them fly!

You know, THE AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY, now going into its second hundred (its already in it) it has occured to me that we actually have here a sort of generalized BLUEGRASS FAN CLUB - what I mean, of course, is that we have not singled out one particular star and devoted ourselves totally to him or her, but have sought to INCLUDE any and ALL who play this wonderful music that stirs our souls so deeply. Some of what I said last month about young people getting started (or just giving them a break) should be of great concern to us. Although I did include in the last bulletin a big plug for the STANLEY BROTHERS FAN CLUB, these are established performers and their club is, primarily, to support, enthusiastically, THE STANLEY BROTHERS specifically. However, they deserve a great vote of confidence, because they do include other groups in their literature who they believe are following in the tradition of the STANLEYS. That's good. They give promotion to new groups and they confirm their confidence in the STANLEYS. They are accomplishing two things without either of them contradicting the other. OUR SOCIETY, on the other hand, gives no preference to any particular group in Bluegrass, but we seek to promote Old Tyme and Bluegrass MUSIC irregardless of WHO may perform it. We are, therefore, a BLUEGRASS FAN CLUB. Several letters have more or less referred to us as such, and I for one, have no objections at all! Long live BLUEGRASS. I don't believe we have begun to reach our potential influence on society or in the recording studios, but you can be sure of this, if we continue and press on, we will be heard and BLUEGRASS MUSIC which reaches the public on record will be more of what it is in the mountains (and has been for a long, long time) rather than what we get now (excluding of course, the GOOD groups).

I referred to the EDWARDS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION which is doing research into Folk and Mountain music of America and asked that you send books, records and other items of that nature to Mr. Archie Green in Philadelphia, Pa. However, a letter from Archie asked me to ask you to send your materials directly to the JOHN EDWARDS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, c/o THE FOLKLORE AND MYTHOLOGY CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024. If you send things to Archie he will have to forward them on, so send them direct. Please cooperate in this venture - it is something that we CAN do which can have a lasting and meaningful influence. After all this is our business. If you are in doubt if the foundation can use what you have, write to them and tell them what you have or ask them what they would enjoy receiving specifically. I wish the Foundation the best of luck in this worthwhile study.

We got off on a weak leg when we began last November and we are nearing our 1st Anniversary a great deal stronger. In fact, we have done exceedingly well since the only nationwide advertisement we have had was that which was included in mailings of orders to the BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF. We will advertise for members directly via an ad in some of the magazines which cater to Bluegrass and Folk Music. Stand back and watch us grow in number and in influence.

Our new officers have some outstanding ideas and that is their primary job at present. In the future we will be doing a lot of important and enjoyable things, but for now IDEAS are valuable..... send your ideas for any improvement of the Society and the Bulletin to us NOW. I will thank you in advance because you are a good group and eager to go about doing good.

The following will clearly establish the fact that we have some good officers this year.

WHAT IS BLUEGRASS?

By
Carol Ann Gawle
Vice Pres.

Bluegrass is the nicest thing that happened to music. Its fans are endowed with an enthusiasm that can be matched only by that of a gang of ten-year-olds let loose in a well-stocked candy store. And at times, though they are apt to over-do their attempts at "finding new converts to join them in their pursuit of a brilliant banjoist or frenetic fiddler, they can usually break through the verneer of the most indifferent listener, and set his foot a-tapping.

A Bluegrass fan can be more loyal (and super-critical) than any expert in the field. He can stomp harder, whistle longer, applaud louder and cheer wilder than anyone else in an audience for a great Bluegrass performance, but he breaks out in a cold sweat when he sees some group billed as a "BLUEGRASS" band come out on stage and start plugging their instruments into amplifiers.

Bluegrass is a Brooks Brothers suit with fingerpicks in its vest pocket, determination with callouses on its fingertips, and wickedness with its tongue in its cheek. Bluegrass is playable with many musical instruments - Guitar, Banjo (5 String, of course) Bass, Mandolin, Dobro, and a voice, singing at the top of its lungs from behind the wheel of a car, on the way to work in the morning.

A Bluegrass fan likes: new strings, fingerpicks, string ties, train sounds, and long fingers. He's not much for: broken strings, ragged banjo picking, long finger nails, people who call Bluegrass "hillbilly" music and electricity.

Who can cause more commotion, exuberance, racket, and real bliss than this combination of Bill Monroe, Bob Johnson and Lester Flatt? He can leave fingerprints on your Guitar, scratches on your records and chewing gum in your music book. Then, just when you're ready to let the strings rust, he shows you a fantastic new run and you're hooked again. (continued on next page)

(Carol Ann's article "What is Bluegrass?" continued)

Yop, he's a nerve wracking son-of-a-banjo, and his music is raucous, noisy, and the greatest thing since toothpicks. But when you've had a rotten day, and you drag yourself home weary and beaten, you feel like a winner again to hear the strains of Bluegrass coming through the door and you hear once again that magic phrase, "Goin' down to Cripple Creek to have a little fun."

Carol Ann Gawle.

EDITORS NOTE: Thanks Carol, that was great - truly inspired!

The following tablature for Guitar is sent in by Jesse Miller. In his letter he said: "It has a good Bluegrass sound, in my opinion when using a capo on the seventh fret.The Osbornes were here recently and as usual put on a fabulous show. I am interested in getting together with grassers in this area." So, if you live in Jesse's area get with him or write to him: address is: Jesse Ike Miller 3433 Horseshoe Trail, Bossier City, La. HERE IS THE TABLATURE: (for "Jed's Dallad") Key of C

TTTTIMTINTIMTINTIM^{G7}TIMTINTIM^FINTIMTINTIM
 3 0 2 3 3 2 3 0 2 3 2 2
 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 TIMT^CMTIMTTT TIMT^FINTIMTINTIM
 2 3 2 0 3 3 2 3 3
 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 TIMT^{F#}IM^GTIMTINTIMTINTIM^CTTTIM^FINTIMT^FINTIM^FINTIM
 4 4 5 5 5 5 0 2 3 3 0 2 3
 2 2 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 0 0 0

(Jesse says to repeat again, and again, etc)

"BLUEGRASS AND FOLK STYLE GUITAR" By Robin Scott is a very unique and completely workable method of instruction both in Bluegrass and Folk picking. It is one of the very best manuals on Guitar that we have ever seen or tried to learn from. We cannot recommend it too highly, and we are not saying this simply to sell it. It is true. TABLATURE DIAGRAMS EXPLAIN ALL STROKES AND PICKING PATTERNS and a "count" system makes the timing extremely clear. A section of the instruction seeks to "explain" just how simple reading music really is so that the student may learn how to "dig out" the melody notes from written music of songs he cannot find in tablature or hear the music on record. This section on reading music is totally an added help, BECAUSE IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE TO LEARN BLUEGRASS AND FOLK GUITAR FROM THIS BOOK WITHOUT KNOWING OR READING OR LEARNING ANY MUSICAL NOTATION.

There is a rather extensive section dealing with "FINGERPICKING" giving many "patterns" in fingerpicking. We have had many, many requests for this type of instruction - so here it is made clear.

Chord diagrams show not only the chord, but how to move the fingers from one chord to another taking much of the guesswork out of this part of learning. Some of the items covered in Robin's book are: CHOOSING A GUITAR - TUNING - PICKS - STRINGS - ALTERNATE BASS STRUM/PICK - "DOUBLE-THUMB SCRATCH" - THUMB/PLUCK STYLE - FIVE ARPEGGIO PATTERNS - ON THE BEAT & OFF THE BEAT PICKING - HAMMERING ON - PULLING OFF - DAMPING - BENDING - SLIDES OR SLURS - AND A SET OF ULTRA-NICELY WORKED OUT TABLATORES OF WHOLE MELODIES. Postpaid from the BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF at \$4.98 GET YOURS NOW!

We have had continuous requests for a manual of instruction on the Dobro. Well, we finally came up with one and this manual will get you started in a fine way on this hard to understand instrument. Tells how to make your own Dobro from a regular type flat top guitar. Tuning, using the bar, a short history of the Dobro Guitar, chords up the neck, correct way to tune for playing easily and with other Bluegrass instruments - Carefully written out TABLATURES of FOUR melodies... Suggestions on the best type of strings to us - picks - How to tune from a piano keyboard - more.

Most would be Dobro players don't even know how to approach the instrument, let alone play one. This manual makes it possible to get the basic principles down pat and pave the way for success in learning to play the Bluegrass Dobro. By Keith Tyler and Pete Richardson - COMPLETELY BY EAR- AND THIS, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE IS THE VERY ONLY COMPLETELY BY EAR INSTRUCTION MANUAL EMPLOYING TABLATURE DIAGRAMS EXCLUSIVELY. These are Hawaiian Guitar manuals which teach little or nothing, but not such a manual on Dobro as this one. From the Bluegrass Bookshelf at \$4.98 postpaid.

SPECIAL - Get both manuals ROBIN SCOTT'S BOOK AND THE DOBRO BOOK BY KEITH TYLER at the same time and save money. BOTH BOOKS FOR \$8.00 during October as a initial offer only.

RUEBEN MEADOWS has prepared a tape to demonstrate the contents of his Book on 5 String Banjo. Price is \$4.95 postpaid. RUEBEN has also prepared 10 FIVE STRING BANJO TABLATORES which sells for \$2.95. Tunes are: 1. Foggy Mountain Top 2. Darling Nellie Gray 3. Oh Susannah, 4. Camptown Races 5. Devils Dream (continued on pg.5)

(Reuben Meadows books - continued)

6. Careless love in D tuning 7. My Old Kentucky Home 8. Grandfathers Clock 9. Pretty Polly and 10. Jesse James. Reuben has prepared this book of tablatures from requests after buying his manual of instruction "A Comprehensive Approach to Bluegrass and Folk Style Banjo". (Bluegrass Bookshelf \$3.98) The tablature book by Reuben is \$2.95 postpaid. A tape to cover and demonstrate the melodies in the tablature book is available also - price is \$4.95.

HOW TO ORDER THESE ITEMS: (Please place with your catalog)

RMT-1 10 - FIVE STRING BANJO TABLATURES BY Reuben Meadows \$2.95

RSG-1 "BLUEGRASS AND FOLK STYLE GUITAR" By Robin Scott \$4.98

DG -1 "HOW TO PLAY THE BLUEGRASS DOBRO" By Ear. \$4.98

(all manuals by ear - no musical notation in tabs)

DOT-1 DOBRO TAPE TO EXPLAIN DOBRO BOOK \$4.95

MTAB-1 REUBEN MEADOWS TABLATURE TAPE \$4.95

RMTT-REUBEN MEADOWS TAPE DEMONSTRATING HIS MANUAL \$4.95

RST-1 ROBIN SCOTT TAPE DEMONSTRATING THE MANUAL \$4.95

- INSTRUMENTS FOR SALE -

Please phone Area Code 813 - 689-1164 if interested in any item. We cannot accept "collect" calls - calls after 8 P.M. are cheap.

ALUMINUM SHELL 5 STRING BANJO - A very nice inexpensive Banjo with better than average sound as a second Banjo or a beginning instrument. Has Plastic head too. We recommend it BRAND NEW \$55.00

ESPANA FOLK GUITAR - Get this -!!! ALL ROSEWOOD - Beautiful and NEW This is a wonderful Classic (Nylon string Guitar) Price: \$155.00

BANJO-LUTE - First \$150 takes it. Beautiful wood and a very nice antique instrument - wonderful for ballads - plays just like a 5 string Banjo - but what a difference in sound.

NOTE: My description of the ALUMINUM SHELL 5 STRING BANJO is not at all good enough - let me spell out this Banjo a little better. This is the type of Banjo that I have been looking for for a long time....something inexpensive that would give a GOOD TONE, HAVE GOOD ACTION, AND HAVE A RESONATOR. Well, this Banjo (only \$55.00 mind you) has an exceptionally nice fingerboard (bound), 20 brackets, and arm rest, a sun-burst finish resonator, plastic head, adjustable tension tailpiece, steel re-inforced neck, sounds better than either of the two major inexpensive models or makes, and I enjoy playing one of them personally. It makes a very good second Banjo to take anywhere with you and is a much better than average Banjo to learn on. I don't believe you could get anywhere near this quality for less than \$125.00 if made by a major company. Truthfully, I don't know how long we will be able to get them for this price.

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF

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Peter A. Richardson, Owner



Report: "SECOND ANNUAL ROANOKE BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL"

By

DAVID TEETER

President, American Bluegrass Society

Prepared expressly for members of the
Society to be printed in the Bulletin.

On Labor Day weekend, the 2nd Annual Roanoke Bluegrass Festival was held again this year on Cantrell's horse farm near Fincastle, Virginia. This festival is the most important and the most unique of those festivals featuring bluegrass performers; not only for the sheer number of important performers present, but for the Story of Bluegrass presented on the last day of the festival. This Bluegrass Story is entirely unique to the Roanoke Festival.

Bill Monroe, his music, and all the various bands he's had were the subjects of the Bluegrass Story. During the course of the afternoon one saw Bill performing with one of his earliest performers and guitarists, Clyde Moody; Bill picking with the Osborne Brothers (something quite unique, although Sonny played with Bill at the age of thirteen in the early '50's); Bill playing with Rudy Lyle, one of his finest banjo pickers; Bill playing with Kenny Baker, Don Reno, Mac Wiseman, Bobby Baker, and many others. Rudy Lyle picked "Rawhide" and "Molly and Tenbrooks", two of the famous recordings Rudy picked for Bill. Rudy's picking wasn't as good as everyone expected, for after the show, Rudy told me that he hadn't picked a banjo for years! (Incidentally, Rudy is now a lead guitar picker in Nashville)

Red Smiley and the Bluegrass Cut-ups were very fine and received much praise from the audience. Red sang in his usual casual manner and as excellently as always. Billy Edwards picked 5 String Banjo for Red and did a very splendid job. (David Deese, Red's Banjo player last year, was drafted!). Tater Tate on fiddle, John Palmer on Bass and Gene Burrows on second Guitar and high tenor were fine as always. The highlight of Red's part of the show was the performance of "Love, Please Come Home", perhaps my favorite song.

Don Reno, who until 1963 was Red's partner, was at the festival with his band, the Tennessee Cut-ups. His son Ronnie is an accomplished mandolin picker, although he is very imitable of his father; Chuck Haney, Don's guitar player and lead singer, is very fine although he gets little chance to display his talent on stage. Don who is undoubtedly familiar to us all, amazed the audience with his unusual banjo playing and perhaps stole the show. His singing was in rather poor form, however.

The Osborne Brothers were exceptionally fine, and undoubtedly did the best singing at the festival. "Making Plans" a song from their new album on Decca, DL 4767, Up This Hill and Down, was, in my opinion, their finest performance; "Ruby" was fine as always. Dale Sledd from Missouri is their present Guitar player.

About the finest show there was Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys, although it would be hard to beat the Osbornes. Dobby Thompson's Banjo Picking was the finest at the festival, Jesse McReynolds' mandolin picking as the most unique, and Jim's tenor was one of the highest. (I'd like to hear Bobby Osborne and Jim McReynolds sing double tenor parts with Bill Monroe).

Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys gave a wonderful show. His present band, is, to many persons, one of the finest bands Bill has had. His band, besides being good, is very young, and surprisingly enough, is all city boys; Lamar Grier, Banjo (Washington, D.C.), Richard Green, Fiddle (Los Angeles, California), Pete Rowan, Guitar (Boston, Massachusetts), and of course Bill and his son on Bass. Richard Green played an absolutely fantastic version of "Orange Blossom Special" with some tremendous double stops! Pete Rowan has an excellent voice and sings "Dark Holler" quite well in D.

The Country Gentlemen also performed at the festival. There were many other performers, all of them fine; one thing was quite apparent though, and that was the significant performers who were absent: The Stanley Brothers, Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys, Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, Red Allen and the Kentuckians, Frank Wakefield, Vassar Clements,

(If you will be kind enough to yourself to turn the page we will continue with this splendid report by Dave Teeter)

(Report by President Teeter continued from previous page)

Dave Grisman, who plays with the New York Ramblers and who was also an M.C., did some of the finest Mandolin picking at the festival if not the best. Several highpoints of the festival were the duets with Mac Wiseman and Bobby Osborne with Sonny Osborne on Banjo. (The duets can be heard on Mac's new album on Dot - Bluegrass DLP 3731). The Mandolin workshop was fantastic, particularly when Bill Monroe, Bobby Osborne, Dave Grisman, Ronnie Reno and John Duffey played "Old Joe Clark" together!

You've probably noticed that I've been using superlatives all the way through this review, but if you were there and were writing this, you would too! All in all, it was an extremely gratifying weekend, and entirely worthwhile if you really love BLUEGRASS.

#

EDITOR'S NOTE - Dave a great deal of plaudits to you for a most engrossing and detailed report. The next best thing to being there I should say. - By the way, because Dave would not blow his own horn, plays Banjo like something else and has his own unique renditions of the "Notre Dame Fight Song" (in Bluegrass no less) and a very beautiful and moving one of "Greensleeves Breakdown" the latter being published in an earlier edition of the Bulletin. Next month we can look forward to reports by Dave on the new albums by Mac Wiseman, The Osborne Brothers, Jimmy Martin and Bill Monroe.

BLUEGRASS "in general"

----- By Reuben Meadows

We can thank the Good Lord that Bluegrass as an idiom of musical expression did not begin as most music does - in the fashionable uptown districts of Tin Pan Alley (If there are really such things as uptown districts of that immortal area of U.S. geography. The whole thing began, not as a pre-set plan by Madison Avenue Idiots who never wore feed sack clothing, but by people like Bill Monroe, and probably more like one Shuffy Jenkins although it was Bill who gave it a handle and has made the term a part of our American vocabulary.

I am thinking, as I sit here trying to bring my thoughts together into something that sounds logical and intelligible, that we owe our greatest debt of gratitude to people who played all sorts of Mountain Music (I would say Country Music, but that is a non-descript term now, and losing any resemblance to what it is supposed to represent - as is the case with Buck Owens who now calls his music "American" music). Anyway, those Banjo pickers who drop thumbed their way through life and rapped and frailed their way to festivals before they were called by that term - these people have had a tremendous part in developing the fast flurry of three finger Bluegrass Banjo that really makes the Bluegrass Band today. And, as I see it in the long glance backward, the rapping and frailing Banjo has as much a part in Bluegrass as what Earl Scruggs or Don Reno or Sonny Osborne plays or the style of Bill Baker or Bill Keith (which also belongs in the general heading of Bluegrass). We who have tried to write manuals of instruction on Bluegrass picking have found ourselves more or less strapped to stick to straight 3 finger picking. This is fine, except that we have been forced to term rapping or frailing "folk" picking which is not accurate in the least. Witness the "folk" performers - they employ, in the main a type of 3 finger style akin to Scruggs, Reno and the rest. During the Folk Fad (as it is now commonly called on Madison Ave.) I don't recall seeing many (one did in fact) using the rapping style of Banjo picking like Pete Seeger uses most all the time. Most of the Banjo players with the Folk Groups simply played away with a straight pick most of the time which made the 5th string useless anyway.

Therefore, may I conclude this piece of journalism by saying that 3 finger (Scruggs) picking should not be dubbed "Bluegrass" and the rapping and frailing methods excluded. Personally I should like to hear more of it on albums and on the stage, but we must remember that we will hear only what we DEMAND on record and stage. It is a BUSINESS and the performers are BUSINESSMEN by and large. And too, students of the 5 seem to learn 3 finger style much faster when they already know rapping.

November is First Anniversary of the American Bluegrass Society and the Bulletin as its mouthpiece or spokesman. We can all wish ourselves a Happy Anniversary and hope for many, many more. We are now WELL PAST 100 in membership and the applications are coming in faster and in greater bulk every day. Therefore we can look forward to a much better year in all respects. Also, we should remember that the more we have the louder our voice.

Dues are \$3.00 per year. We have a brand new membership card which is printed on a slick cardstock with a 5 string Banjo ghosted over the fine printing. It is a very impressive looking card. We are getting some decals printed that will be sent to each member to put on his or her vehical or wherever they desire. We are also in the process of designing a crest to be embrodered to be nice enough to compliment a coat or jacket. A charge will be made (of necessity) for the crest, but the decal and card are part of the \$3.00 dues. And, of course, your subscription to the Bulletin is included in the \$3.00. Let us have your dues this month (November) if your membership card says "expires 11/65" or your membership number is 1 - 33 or 40 - 52. Two memberships, nos. 39 and 60 expire 12/66.

INSTRUMENTS

There is a page of special priced instruments which the Bookshelf has made available in this bulletin. Look these photos over and please note the very low price. They are fine instruments, and if you think that you have to pay hundreds of dollars for nice looking and sounding instruments or go without then I cannot convince you. But these instruments are good instruments and are very inexpensive for the sound and overall good looks. We looked just about everywhere for instruments which would "get the job done" without paying a mint for them. We looked over literally hundreds of brands and instruments before finally deciding on one Banjo and one Guitar. The Tenor Guitar is much lower in price than the 6 String Guitar or the 5 String Banjo because this is not of the quality. However Tenor Guitars are hard to come by anyway regardless of the quality. This one is a good Tenor Guitar although low in price. You will be saving money on any of these instruments. The peghead or headstock overlay on the 6 String Guitar is very beautiful and is hand inlayed in real Ebony. You just will not find this in this price range and you probably won't find this type of inlay work even on instruments of the HIGH price range. We were fortunate in locating this instrument and we don't know when the supplier will be OUT! Both instruments (the Banjo and the 6 String Guitar) have good action and are light in weight - two features that you will appreciate if you know anything about Banjos and Guitars. We are happy to offer them to you on our FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

Dear Mr. Richardson, I recently rnrrolled in the Bluegrass Society and have received two Bulletins. I am having trouble interpreting your tablatures. Could you send me an explanation? (Especially O-G, P over A, P, and T, and P over T. Thank you, Dave Chavez. (ANSWER: Dave, the tablatures are by a number of people and all use some differing notations. O-G simply means Open C chord while picking that particular part. P over A means "pull Away" the same as Pull Off, a large P means a one stroke pause (Reuben Meadows uses an X for this purpose), T is thumb, and P over T means a "power tap" or hammer stroke.)

Dear Pete, I am a fairly recent member of the American Bluegrass Society (#092). I live in the Chicago area, which is fairly stagnated when it comes to Bluegrass music. Old Town Chicago, and the University of Chicago are about dead when it comes to Bluegrass. The only time there seems to be any music is when the U of Chicago Folk Festival comes around in February. I was wondering if you could possibly give me the names and addresses of any members in the Chicago area. All this last Summer I've been trying to get a band together, but there just doesn't seem to be anyone around that plays. We have a Banjo, and I play the Guitar. We've played at a local coffee house but the music doesn't seem to appeal to too many people other than the "in" group we hang around with. No one seems to like the (continued on page 6

BLUEGRASS GUITAR

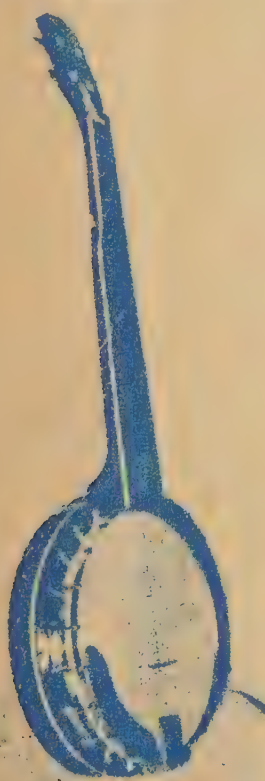


Good woods -
Mirror-like finish
Well constructed
Pearl inlays in real
gaboon ebony on
headstock. This is a
Bargain, while they last.



Price - \$79⁰⁰ (CLOSE-UP OF INLAID HEADSTOCK)

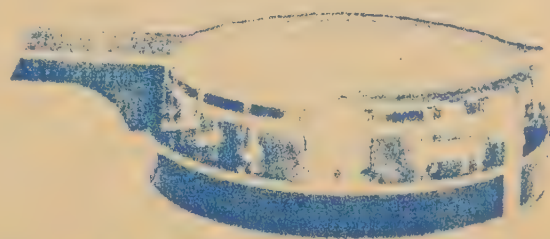
ALUMINUM SHELL BANJO (5 STRING)



20 brackets - resonator
Adjustable Tension Tailpiece

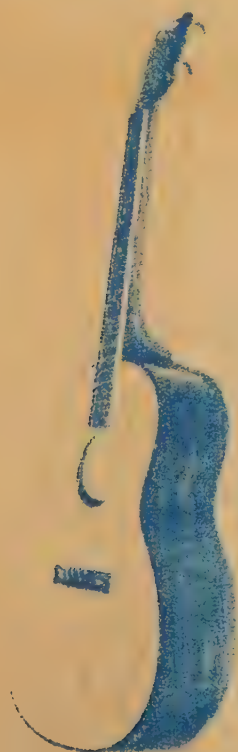
Plastic head - arm rest
Bound Finger board

Good Tone &
Low action



Price - \$55⁰⁰ (CLOSE-UP OF SHELL)

TENOR GUITAR



A nice small guitar, - 4 strings -
Use Guitar tuning of first 4
strings or, tune like your Banjo &
use banjo chords - good to begin a
child on - or just to have fun with.

Price - \$19⁰⁰

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (continued)

"countryness" of the music. They want to hear the psuedo-folk urban sound. Both my friend and I have been playing for over 2 years (one year together) until I met the banjo player I was doodling with the guitar, but he got me interested in the real "folk music", Bluegrass, and since then I've been playing nothing but Bluegrass and Old Tyme styles. It's really enjoyable. Thank you for letting me ramble on, Sincerely yours, Skip Meister, 9213 So. Monitor Avenue, Oak Lawn, Illinois. (ANSWER: Dear Skip- you are having a problem of finding other Bluegrassers like a lot of other people. I will print (as I have) your address and ask those in your area (there are some) to contact you. This is the best way as some do not want their addresses printed. I hope that you get some response from the members living in your area.)

Editors note: I have received a very long letter from Miss Judy Steinberg who is blind and has to have letters read to her. She would greatly enjoy having tape letters that she can hear and answer by herself. If you would care to correspond with her with regard to Bluegrass Music I know that she would enjoy it greatly. write: Miss JudySteinburg (send tape) 4605 Lancelot Place, Brookhaven, Pennsylvania 19015.

A FEW OPEN NOTES TO A FEW PEOPLE: O.K. Mr. Hobbs shall we leave the whole matter hanging in the air or would you care to let me know what you have decided. -----Jim - I will answer the tape when I can find the time, no time right now.-----Charles, how is the New Vega Seeger Model?----- Richard in Altadena say I haven't heard from you in quite a spell - hows things --- O.K. Linson how about some fine material from your typewriter to follow up the epic on the beach?-----How is Gene in North Attleboro?-----Alvin in Union Mills have you quit your Banjo?--- Karl in West Long Branch hows things-----Leland in Detroit why not contact our letter writer of this month Mr. Meister?----- Hey Scales what happened to you?-----And good friend Erwin with the Whyte Laydie let us know how the show dates are coming and where so we can come see you pick the Banjo left handed and the Guitar upside down-----Mr. Duke at Vandy are you still picking? -----Dick on Ashley in Colton are the prices better now?--- Frank in Hartford, too busy with the practice?----- Hey Conner 36th Arty, how is service life and your picking?-----Matchett we haven't heard from you for awhile. -----Storie in Missouri are you working at it yet?-----Doc on Oakridge - after being aided with the peg board can you handle the ice cream cone?----- Myrtle at Box 424 did you leave the country?-----Royce at Turkey Creek how are the parents treating you now-a-days?----- Dr. Flemming did you get the Gibson all fixed up?-----Hey you RM1 # 074 is the shack ringing?-----How is the Long neck Bobby? And for the love of Pete what happened to Curtis in Dover and are the tuners lying silent or do you twist them now and then? Bob Ryder you are not all that busy are you - did you find a Blue Ribbon or a Silver Bell. And last but not least Hoorah for Grant County named for the surveyor instead of the boozier.

To those of you who have written expressing interest in the electrical pick-up for your Banjo - so that we will not take up the time of purists in the Bulletin who don't stand for electronics at all, just let me say that the Bookshelf has now received word from a MAJOR Banjo company that an amplifier for the Banjo has finally been developed that will do the job that you want but the price is steep (but so are good pick-ups for Guitars.) They run about \$75.00 each and that does not include the amplifier. If you are still interested write to me Pete Richardson at the Bookshelf and I will take care of the matter for you.

My conclusion is that MOST - certainly not all - of the Banjo pickers across the country (society members and others) are lean, intense emotional characters, extreme lovers of Bluegrass and have a quick mind. One can have a quick mind and not be too bright however. Nervous, yes, and given to lethargy - perhaps they feel they need the Banjo for a stimulent. Our Survey of best pickers comes out like this: Scruggs, Doug Dillard, and Ralph Stanley with Allen Shelton getting some votes of number. Now, how about Guitar pickers and Mandolin and Dobro players?



MANY READERS
HAVE TOLD US
THAT REPORTS ON
PERSONAL APPEAR-
ANCES BY NORM
CARLSON HAVE
HAVE BEEN GREAT.
WE WILL ADD OUR
EDITORIAL PLAUDITS
TO NORM FOR A
VERY GOOD JOB OF
REPORTING. NORM

IS SHOWN HERE^S IN THE CENTER OF PHOTO
WITH CARTER STANLEY ON THE RIGHT AND
RALPH STANLEY ON NORM'S LEFT. WE HOPE
THAT NORM WILL KEEP UP THE VERY
GOOD JOB OF REPORTING AS WE ENTER OUR
SECOND YEAR. THANKS AGAIN NORM!

HEY! WHY NOT GIVE
A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION-
MEMBERSHIP TO THE
BULLETIN & SOCIETY
TO A FRIEND - WHY
NOT TO AN ENEMY?
HE MAY BECOME A
NICE GUY OR GAL FROM
LEARNING TO LOVE 'GRASS

— • —



WHAT?

FIRST ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL FROM
THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF —

SCRUGGS TUNERS (LOOK → \$32⁰⁰)
YOU WILL NEVER FIND THEM THAT
LOW — GOOD ONLY THROUGH NOV-
EMBER 1966. BUY RIGHT NOW

— • —



THANKS TO JOHN N. FISH
(Society Member # 118)

WE can thank (and do) Mr. John N. Fish for the cartoon figures on our cover this month. John did this drawing especially for us. He is a staff cartoonist for the newspaper in Evansville, Indiana. This is a most unique and terribly fitting for our interests and our bulletin. Thanks again John and can we have something else like this now and then?

TABLETURE

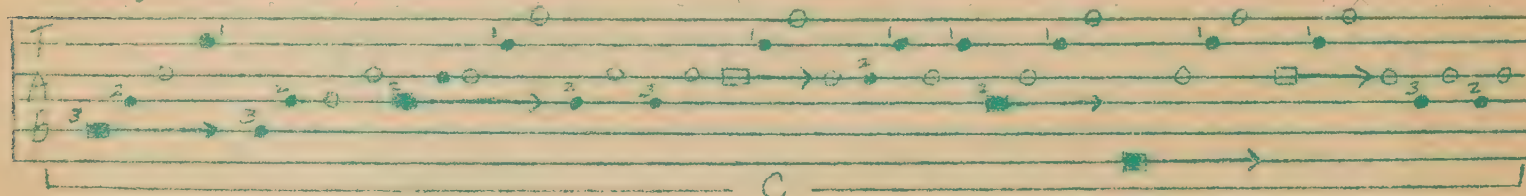
The following tablature is sent in by Society member Owen Hunt who felt that a completely THUMB-TYPE exercise which plays a melody rather well at the same time would be worthwhile and welcomed by guitarists and would-bees.

NOTE: Play first part twice, then play second part twice, then play the first part again but omitting last 4 notes to end the song.

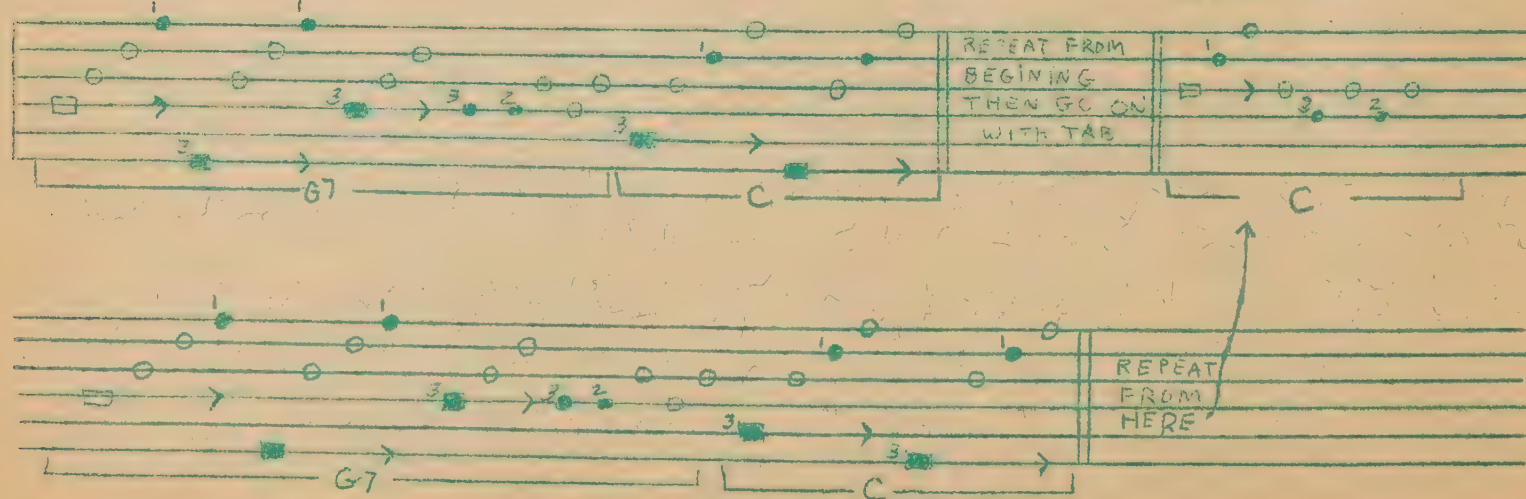
All notes are played with the THUMB! This is a thumb exercise.
All notes not numbered are played open. ALL numbers refer to frets. Sound all notes drawn  (fretted) or  (open) as long as the arrow. All other notes may be of equal length. Try the caop on the higher frets for different sounds. Here goes:

LONG, LONG AGO

Key of C FIRST PART



SECOND PART



Enclosed please find \$3 for my (new _____ or renewal _____) membership in the American Bluegrass Society.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Mail this application form to the following address:

The American Bluegrass Society
c/o The Bluegrass Bookshelf
P. O. Box 487
Seffner, Florida 33584

American Bluegrass Society
P. C. Box 487
Seffner, Florida 33584

Your November Bulletin !



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Bluegrass Bulletin

Volume No. II

- DECEMBER 1966 -

No. 2

To Enjoy Bluegrass Best Participate !!

Many letters have been received lately asking for more "fodder for the fan". The letters say that we seem more geared to the performer than the fan. This is undoubtedly true, but a bit of explanation is in order. For the newer members of the Society let me say that we began from a publication known as THE BLUEGRASS BANJO BULLETIN. The bulletin was published free of charge for the students of the BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF. We later on began including all the other instruments in the Bluegrass Band and formed the AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY. Thus, we did indeed begin with playing "fans" or people who loved the sound of Bluegrass so much that they had a deep desire to "do it themselves." The Bluegrass Bulletin has changed its form (with respect to printing) several times and we are proud to be able to publish from now on in the present page format. The letter from strictly listening fans brings me to say this: YOU OUGHT TO LEARN TO PLAY SOME BLUEGRASS INSTRUMENT NOW AND GET INTO THE REAL STUFF OF WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT. Bluegrass is something that has to be lived to be enjoyed as it should. You will never be satisfied completely - to simply pat your foot and move the needle on your hi-fi. When you get your "fingers" into the act and begin making the music yourself you will come to an enjoyment of Bluegrass music that nobody can begin to explain to you. I could not write enough to persuade you that you are missing a great deal by remaining a "listening fan." But, if you persist in your argument that you will remain a listening fan, you will someday succumb to the fever that is only cured by learning to play a Bluegrass instrument! In years to come you will kick your own posterior for putting it off. Bluegrass has a fascinating appeal to the core of the human being. IT WILL NOT BE DENIED if you like the music at all - you will have to play a Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar, Dobro, Fiddle, or String Bass or you will chew your fingers off with desire to "get into the act." ANY BLUEGRASS FAN IS A GREAT PERSON, BUT A PLAYING FAN IS BETTER.

"THE SUNNYSIDERS" Rising New Bluegrass Group



ROY & SONNY

Is YOUR Membership
Renewal DUE ???

IF SO, RENEW NOW
AND ENROLL A FRIEND
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!

One of our major interests is to bring to the attention of the public NEW PROMISING STARS AND GROUPS. We support all Bluegrass Groups, but a few groups are getting all the publicity and the Bluegrass fans never get a chance to hear GOOD GROUPS. We are proud to bring to the fore SONNY AND ROY - THE SUNNYSIDERS. Sonny Nelson has a Five String Banjo that he makes talk - it speaks with a Bluegrass accent. The other half of the Sunnysiders is one Roy McGinnis who has a high AND clear tenor voice. These two items, as any Bluegrass fan knows, makes for what it takes. These fellows have one vital ingredient that many or most of the others do not - mainly, they have a set determination to perform at their very best everytime they appear. No matter how perfect they seem to arrange a number, they give that extra bit of big effort when on the stage, to make the song better. The Sunnysiders won first place in the Small Group Class, in a poll by vote conducted by the Michigan Country News. From that came calls for shows and appearances on TV. They are up for a recording contract and here is hoping that they make many records and that the records find their way into

your home and onto your hi-fi. The Sunnysiders may be reached for personal appearances by writing to "The Sunnysiders", 1156 - 21st Street, Wyandotte, Michigan. They are regular members of the Monroe County Jamboree in Monroe, Michigan. We thank Society member Bobby McIntire for bringing this fine group to our attention so that we could bring them to yours. Lets all get behind the newer, younger groups - many, many times they are more intense in their love for the music - the honeymoon isn't over, so to speak and it is so evidently over for many of the long time headliners. Going to see them is often less than what a Bluegrass lover would like to see or what they expected. Support the newer groups.

A Merry Christmas

III Reviewing RECORDS with Dave Teeter *President of the A.B.S.*

This record review column is based on a five star system; a full five stars signifies a superior record, four stars for excellent, three stars for average, two stars for below average but listenable, one star for very poor. Each side of a record (long playing album) will be rated separately.

The purpose of this column will be to determine the bluegrass excellence of a record and not its commercial value. Also, only bluegrass records or bluegrass related records will be reviewed - since this is a publication for persons who like bluegrass. There are many fine country/western albums, but reviewing them is not the purpose of this column.

Each review represents only the opinion of the reviewer and not necessarily the opinion of the society. Readers are invited to question these opinions, and they are invited to recommend the reviewing of certain records (if the reviewer has access to the record).

THE HIGH LONESOME SOUND OF BILL MONROE - DECCA
DL 4780

Side 1 : My Little Georgia Rose - Letter From My Darlin' - Memories of Mother and Dad - Highway of Sorrow - On the Old Kentucky Shore - On and on.
Side 2 : My dying Bed - Memories of You - Whitehouse Blues - Sugar Coated Love - I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome - When the Golden Leaves Begin to Fall.

RATING: *****/*****

I have given this record a five star rating for both sides due to its historical as well as musical value. This record is a neat re-issue of some of Bill Monroe's best singles, played by performers who are notable in themselves. Many of these fine cuts feature Jimmy Martin and Rudy Lyle. The recording debut of Sonny Osborne is marked on "My Dying Bed" recorded on Friday, July 18, 1952. Many of these songs were written by Bill and tell the tale of the hard times in the early 50's. This album is the vocal counterpart to the instrumental re-issue album released about a year ago, and as such, it is highly recommended for purchase.

UP THIS HILL AND DOWN - THE OSBORNE BROTHERS
DECCA DL 4767

Side 1 : Yesterday's Gone - Footprints in the Snow - Hey, Hey, Bartender - Big Spike Hammer - Lonesome Day - Faded Love.
Side 2 : Up This Hill and Down - Making Plans - I Know What It Means to Be Lonesome - I'll be Alright Tomorrow - Sure-fire - In The Pines.

RATING: ***/**

Side 2 of this album is considerably better than side 1 due to a better choice of songs for the Osborne's unique harmony. "Making Plans" is undoubtedly the best vocal on the album; "Sure-Fire" is a sparkling instrumental written by Bobby Osborne. A very successful bluegrass version of a pop hit is "Yesterday's Gone" on side 1. The main trouble with this LP is Sonny's banjo picking or rather his banjo; actually his picking is fine, but one has to listen with considerable attentiveness to even hear Sonny. The banjo particularly falls short on the instrumental by being quite unclear and nowhere near loud enough. The recording is fine for all but the Banjo.

MR. GOOD 'N COUNTRY MUSIC - JIMMY MARTIN
DECCA DL 4769

Side 1 : The Last Song - The Summer's Come and Gone - Tennessee Waltz - Mr. Engineer - Sweet Dixie - The Good Things (Outweigh the Bad).
Side 2 : Hi-de Diddle - Lost Highway - I can't Quit Cigarettes - Fraulein - Run Boy Run - You're Gonna Change (or I'm Gonna Leave)

RATING: ***/**

This album is Jimmy Martin's usual mixture of good and bad songs. Side 1 is good, with mostly good songs, an excellent instrumental featuring Bill Emerson on the Banjo, Vernon Derrick on the Fiddle, and Jimmy's own unique and fine singing voice. Side 2, however is basically poor. Jimmy sings "Lost Highway" very well, and his Sunny Mountain Boys play another fine instrumental called Run Boy Run (it is actually Fire on the Mountain), but outside of these, the songs are very poor. Jimmy would be doing himself a favor if he'd quit singing some of that bad stuff!

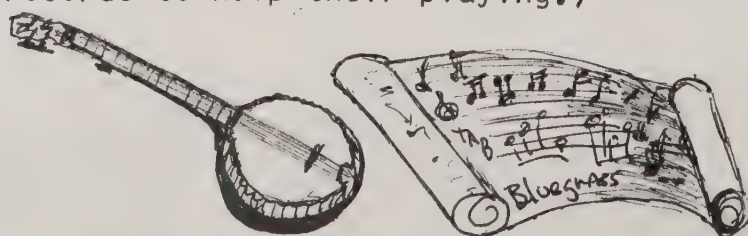
MAC WISEMAN BLUEGRASS
DOT DLP 3731

Side 1: We Live in Two Different Worlds - Tragic Romance - I'll Be A Smiles Tonight - This Is Where I Came In - You're the Best of All the Leading Brands - Don't Make Me Go to Bed and I'll Be Good.
Side 2: The Bluebirds Are Singing For Me - New Black Suit - How Lonely Can You Get - The Day You Went Away - Darling Little Joe - A Million, Million Girls.

RATING: ***/**

This Album marks a change to the better for Mac, after producing a chain of rather non bluegrass type LP's. In addition to the inimitable singing of Mac, this recording is highlighted by the addition of the Osborne Brothers and Tommy Jackson. The duets on side 2 with Bobby Osborne are fine and really come to life, being worth the price of the album in themselves; unfortunately, there are only three duets on the entire LP. Mac's choice of songs is somewhat poor in several cases, but on the average, the album is good.

(Editor's note: This is a fine bit of reviewing on Dave's part. We will have a lot more of this in the future which will no doubt be what non-playing fans will consider as more to their interest. The "playing" fans should also review these records to help their playing.)



[3] = Play with pinky finger of left hand.
 (P) = Pull off (D) = Brush down on strings
 (H) = Hammer On (U) = Brush

900 MILES

Arranged
 Carol Ann Gawle

Handwritten musical notation for the song "900 Miles". The notation is written on a five-line staff with various symbols and numbers indicating fingerings and techniques. The lyrics are written below the staff.

Lyrics:
 I'm A - goin' down the tracks I've got Tears in my eyes
 Tryin' to head a let-ter from my home
 If this Train runs me right, I'll be home to -
 mor - row night 'Cause I'm nine hun-dred miles from my
 home And I hate to heat THAT lone -
 some whist - le Blow.

On the Scene - Bluegrass Show Report - By NORM CARLSON

On October 16th the Stanley Brothers (Carter and Ralph) and their Clinch Mountain Boys (George Shuffler - guitar, and Melvin Goins - bass) performed at Bill Monroe's Brown County Jamboree in Beanblossom, Indiana. This was a chance to renew a warm friendship with the Stanley Brothers in addition to an opportunity to hear the best show I have heard them put on. Carter's voice was clear, inspiring, and perfectly controlled. It matched or exceeded his finest recorded examples. George Shuffler's guitar work was also at its peak - dazzling and perfect. Melvin Goins contributed much more to the band than in earlier shows I have seen. He is far more than a comic. The songs he led were fine bluegrass and good entertainment. The over all timing and coordination were definitely superior to other Stanley shows I have seen. This contributes to the enjoyment to a surprising extent. The only improvement anyone could have wished for was to hear more of Ralph's banjo solos and leads. His picking was as outstanding as always - just not enough of it. ----- October 23rd at the Brown County Jamboree, Mac Wiseman was scheduled but failed to appear due to car trouble. Bryant Wilson and his Kentucky Ramblers, also scheduled, filled in. This little-known Indiana group is the best of the bedrock traditional bluegrass bands frequently heard at Beanblossom. Bryant Wilson - guitar, Jesse Gist - fiddle, Frank Noet - banjo, and Elmer Rooks - bass, sound like, look like, and act like real country people. Wilson plays guitar with a skill and taste quite different than you expect to see in a group of unknowns. His voice is the most outstanding feature of the band. It is not only an honestly good singing voice but it carries such a strong country twang that every word and note has an extra charm, a feeling of full authenticity, that makes any bluegrass that lacks this quality seem a fraud. Gist's fiddle makes this band instantly distinguishable from any other. Not being an instrumentalist, I can't describe it more fully than a "flowing scrape" but the only similar sound I have heard is Leslie Keith on the early Rich-R-Tone Stanley Brothers material. Rooks is a good vocalist and bass player. Noet is not exceptionally fast or original on the banjo. ----- Oct. 30th was Bill Monroe's last appearance of the season at his park. Bill had his remarkable young band which we hear so much about lately: Pete Rowan-guitar, Lamar Grier-Banjo, Richard Greene-fiddle, and James Monroe-bass. Greene's fiddling is already a legend. I saw him earlier this summer, but his improvement and present skill are nearly incredible. Unfortunately, it appears (continued on next page) (See ON THE SCENE)

NORM CARLSON - ON THE SCENE (continued from previous page) at least in this show, that the band and perhaps the old master himself have not fully adjusted to this. There did not seem to be as much of the coordination and great sense of balance that has always impressed me in Monroe's music. Tapes I have heard of the band when Brad Keith played banjo contained banjo-mandolin alternations that almost assumed the nature of duels rather than duets. This effect didn't seem to be present between Greene and Monroe. ----- There was only one number by Pete Rowan and few Rowan - Monroe duets, both of which fitted very nicely into previous shows. Bill's son, James, did assume a more positive role in the band than previously.

Despite the above comments, this show like all Monroe shows I have seen was an experience like no other. Monroe's dynamism and projected power are as completely beyond the ability of words to capture on paper as they are beyond the ability of records to recreate.

Local talent rounding out the shows at Beanblossom varies from bad to excellent. Some of the better ones include the Hedrick Brothers, three youngsters remarkable proficient on their instruments for their age. Another good performer is Shorty Sheehan, an old-time fiddler who usually performs with his wife Juanita and a group called the Brown County Fox Hunters. One of the most enjoyable segments each week is when Birch Monroe, Bill's brother and manager of the Jamboree, comes out to play a few old-time fiddle tunes and sing bass on gospel quartet numbers with either the stars or the local talent. ----- Brown County Jamboree is a folk institution in the truest sense of the word. The building is a somewhat rundown shack of plywood and miscellaneous lumber. Part of the floor is concrete and part is gravel. Most of the seats are folding chairs, some are like old-fashioned school seats. On cold days the building is heated by several coal stoves of assorted rustic shapes. (The error of calling them wood stoves in a previous review was due to lack of close observation and the fact that my previous experience has been entirely with wood stoves.) All this contributes to an atmosphere that transcends any other commercial park. I will always remember sitting around the warm stove in the back room, a dusty anteroom with a crude creaky floor. Also sitting there were Carter and Ralph Stanley and Birch Monroe singing "Boat of Love". Another memorable incident, impossible to duplicate elsewhere occurred as Shorty Sheehan was playing "Orange Blossom Special." He worked in this comment, "I see the conductor, only today he's the fireman. Shovel in a little more coal, Birch." Over in one side by a stove was Birch dressed in a suit and tie for MC'ing the show but with a coal bucket in one hand and an old glove on the other, throwing coal into the fire. There is a minimum of formality and no polish at Beanblossom. Country music isn't merely performed there, it is lived. It sounds better that way.

LETTERS to the Editors -

Dear Pete, We've had some good Bluegrass groups playing in and around New York the last little while, and I got a chance to talk to Bill Monroe a bit when he was here, about bluegrass singing and I thought some of the Society members might be interested in what he had to say. He said - that just to sing the words and melody isn't enough. Some of the words in a song mean more than others and should be accentuated. Just a voice that runs straight and doesn't vary, does not do much good. You've got to go up and down louder and softer. You need to ease up here, and pick up there and add some volume in places. The melody has to be slurred and smoothed out a little so the beat doesn't get too strong. He says that you don't have to play a hot break in any number if you get in there and pick the stuff that's really in the song - A few words from the man who knows what bluegrass is a lot about. The best \$1.98 I ever spent was for a record called "The Stanley Brothers" on the Harmony label (HL 7291) It's a good record with some fine singing and of course some great banjo picking by Ralph Stanley. /S/ John Lennard 079.

Peter: Contribution for Bulletin - BLUEGRASS DOWN UNDER - Melbourne, Australia. / Down here fellow pickers, Bluegrass is growing up fast. Picking styles which were rough a few months ago are being polished. Leading local picker - Alan Hawking, has a style similar to Ralph Stanley's - a kind of "double-thumbing sound with three fingers (IMTM). Fortunately for the amateurs like me Bluegrass hasn't taken off with the gimmick-ridden rush of Folkenanny. A Dobro can still be got in the smaller shops for about \$15. Regards, Arnold Baldwin (046)

(Ed. note: Arnold is tremendously interesting, write to him -45 Earl St. Kew, E.4 Victoria, Aus.

Dear Pete, Here is my money and the application form for my membership in the American Bluegrass Society. I am pleased that such a Society exists to promote and to encourage the playing of bluegrass music. I attended the Roanoke Bluegrass Festival with Bill Auman, a Society member here in Asheboro. The Grass Festival really "sold" me on Blue Grass. I am proud, and consider myself fortunate to live in North Carolina, the homestate of Earl Scruggs, Don Reno, Doc Watson, and Billy Edwards' home is just ten miles northwest of Asheboro! Therefore, I am excited about the Society and am waiting with eagerness to receive my membership card and the December issue of the Bluegrass Bulletin.

/s/ Nick Hancock

Bluegrass Bookshelf, Dear Sir, Received your paper and think it is great. I feel that I have found someone that believe in Bluegrass the same as I do. Although your paper seems to be tuned more to the artist than the fan, I will send the dues in hope to further the cause, of more Bluegrass and so that I can learn all that is possible about it. In the future I hope you can include some articles on past and present B.G. artists. The article by Carol Ann Gawle was beautiful, she sounds like a true B.G. fan. I wish I could meet her. We need more like her to promote our music. Yours truly, Donald Harrison. (Ed note: Yes, we are including more for "fans" but read the opening article in this issue - and yes Carol is a great Bluegrass fan and she plays the Guitar and Banjo and sings exceptionally well). (We will print your letters or parts thereof as we have space. Your letters are welcomed so write often and about anything interesting.

SPECIALS TO MEMBERS DURING DECEMBER 1966

Folk Banjo, Book I and Book II plus Folk Banjo Tape (regular \$5.95)	special	5.00
Bluegrass Banjo Book I plus Bluegrass Banjo Book I Tape (reg. 5.90)		5.00
Bluegrass Banjo Book II plus Bluegrass Banjo Book II Tape (reg. 7.90)		6.50
Tab I, Tab II, and Reuben Meadows Tab I (reg. 8.00)		6.50
Reuben Meadows manual and accompanying tape (reg. 8.93)		7.50
Robin Scott Guitar manual and accompanying tape (reg. 9.90)		8.50
Keith Tyler Dobro book plus accompanying tape (reg. 9.90)		8.50
Bluegrass Mandolin book plus accompanying tape (reg. 4.90)		4.00
Black Diamond strings		
5 string banjo, loop end, reg 1.80		1.30
guitar, light guage, reg. 2.50		2.00
mandolin, reg. 3.00		2.50
dobro, reg. 2.50		2.00

Some copies of past issues of the Bluegrass Bulletin are available on a first come, first serve basis at 10 cents each. 1965, November and December. 1966, January, February, and March. (These are the issues available - don't ask for others -don't have!)

This month I would like to cover a point which thus far we have not. I am sorry that all the "country and western" magazines and papers (and all the literature that is sold or given away free) spends so much time giving details about "stars" life - the performer's being more or less "interviewed" with a photographer present to take pictures - and so little to the MUSIC per se. Now, first of all those articles are most always just about like the movie mags in that the facts are not facts and the photos are posed for and the quotes are about things other than the music. If you ask one of the "stars" something (and he knows that you are going to publish it in a slick magazine) he will almost always tell the public what his "newest release" is or about what is going to be pressed with this record company or that. Then there is the photos of the clothing that they wear (which is always cowboy clothing and I still fail to get the connection between what the modern C&W star sings and what he wears.) But, I am wandering from my initial reason here. I am not crazy about any particular star - they're all good if they love their music and do a good job in singing it or picking it. Some are better than others, but the whole thing seems to get turned around and upside down. We have fan clubs that are devoted to nothing else than getting the star popular and let the music per se be hanged. Earl Scruggs and Don Reno are great Banjo men, and I like them a heap, but I like them because they bring me good Bluegrass Banjo music. I don't like bluegrass banjo just because I liked a person named Earl Scruggs or Don Reno and just happened to find out that they played a type of music called Bluegrass. You see, the point is - THE MUSIC IS THE EXPRESSION THAT I LIKE. I don't care about the string tie, pretty boots and all that junk. I like the music. What do I care how many pairs of boots or how many cowboy suits this or that star has in his closet. And I don't care if he races sports cars or raises cattle. I'm glad that he has a hobby and I am glad to hear that he likes animals and raises cattle, but these things don't register unless it is related to his music. The point is not made in ALL the publications I read - the only point I ever read is the glamour about the star, what his big home looks like and all that. I would like to have some down right intimate statements about BLUEGRASS - I don't care how many gold fillings he has in his mouth. Looking over articles I read things like (for the whole point of the article too) such things as "I am traveling to St. Joe, Abeline, New York, et., etc., etc., and then to Nashville where I am going to cut an album with Joe Blow and the Windfall boys. I'll be doing that one for MQM et., etc., etc., And be sure to grab a listen to my latest for XBDGX which is going well for me." Now I hear all that over and over again. Enough of it. I want a star to say what he feels about his music and what type of things he is trying to say to others with his music. Jazz singers and performers are much more ethical about this thing than our Bluegrass stars are - they will speak to the people about what they feel not what they wear or drive. I would like to have him say to me what he thinks about some of the earlier performers - in this regard, what was it that made you so attracted to him and why did you clap until you couldn't anymore? If he were to concern himself with these things and cut the sales pitch for his latest record or tell me about his new heffer or his racing car. The man on the stage many years ago that "turned you on" so to speak - was it his boots that you liked or his music. And if I am right in assuming that the star likes his music better than his boots I FOR ONE AM MORE THAN READY TO HEAR HIM TALK ABOUT IT. (I used to be a DJ and I will talk about some of the experiences I had with stars in that connection next month.)


PETE RICHARDSON

Send in your response to any editorial or answer to a printed letter or anything that you want so long as it is constructive and re-printable. We welcome your letters. THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF, Box 487, Seffner, Florida 33584. Attention to THE BLUEGRASS BULLETIN.

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF
Peter A. Richardson
P. O. Box 487
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Bluegrass Bulletin

Volume No. II

— JANUARY 1967 —

No 3



IN MEMORIAM —

Carter Stanley



Man is born and man dies - a fact of human life that we know is true, and more or less expect to happen, but also a fact that man does not want to accept. Death seems to have such a finality to it that we shrink from the very thought. It is natural to man that he should not want to die, but it is likewise natural for a man to consider that he will never die or that he shouldn't. But man - the human being - he does indeed die, but those things that he concerned himself with never die - in fact they cannot. Man lives with ideals, loves, hates, and a whold world of emotions.

Carter Stanley has died. The human visage which was known, recognized and called by the name of Carter Stanley has been paid his last respects. But, these so called LAST RESPECTS - the physical, material funeral of this man; these things do not comprise the total respect which is due a man. What Carter Stanley set in motion with his voice and his Guitar and his love for the Bluegrass expression - these cannot die, they cannot be obliterated by anyone or anything. We will go right on continually paying respect to Carter Stanley. Because, my friend, if we lay to rest everything that was Carter Stanley in a cemetery, then we - all of us - are also dead. No, what Carter Stanley was is just as alive as it ever was; and it is indeed ALIVE, vibrant and awe inspiring.

Carter Stanley went on stage to bring us the wonderful thing we know as Bluegrass music even when his body was incapable of responding to the challenge - but that did not deter him - he went on and on and on and when he died, he left us with a rich heritage of music that will live as long as man does - on this side or the other. Man does not live by bread alone and Carter Stanley knew that. He did not mount the stage, especially when gravely ill, in order to make a living, but to sing a message of human emotion to people who needed it and who thrived on it. The people of America needed Carter's singing and so he gave it. Any performer will tell you that the one thing of most importance to him is to say something lasting and living to the audience. Carter did this when he felt good and he did it when he was dying. Carter Stanley did not die a rich man, but he left all of us with a richness and wealth that he felt he had to give to us because we asked for it and we needed it. He gave himself on stage and in recording because of the American Bluegrass lover.

As long as man breathes life he will have the gift of Carter Stanley. It is a gift that only Carter Stanley could give - no one else had quite what Carter had to give. We all have our gifts but that gift which was Carter's has been left to us and we are wealthy people because of it. (continued pg 2)

— A HAPPY NEW YEAR —

In Memoriam - CARTER STANLEY (continued from page 1)

Many are asking: "Who will Ralph Stanley find to replace Carter." You know, if one has any degree of human sensitivity at all, one knows without posing the question, that he cannot be replaced. There was only one Carter Stanley and there never will be another one. Someone will, most assuredly, work with Ralph, but whoever it is I know that Ralph will choose him because he has the same general spirit of Carter - not the same talent mind you, but the same spirit - a spirit that demands that he give his best in every performance and that when he dies, that performer too will leave all he is and was to the world of Bluegrass lovers.

It was in a small town in Dickinson County, Virginia (McClure, to be exact) a funeral was held for Carter Stanley. It was conducted in a place which was highly significant to the life of Carter for two reasons, and perhaps more than this writer could ever consider. It was a High School Gymnasium.....the same High School where Carter went to school in McClure. But the fact that Carter and Ralph had presented their music on so many High School Gymnasium floors in their career makes it so very, very significant. This was the type of place in which the Stanleys made their music and it was right and fitting that this great man of our music should lie in state in such a humble environment.

The funeral was delayed for about an hour in order to give a very old and very dear friend of Carter's an opportunity to attend. Bill Monroe came in to be with his friend in his last few moments on earth. Bill walked humbly into the building and stood near the casket and sang, without any accompaniment, his personal tribute to Carter Stanley. Many people we have in this life would devilishly enjoy making something ignoble from this gesture (for the sake of bad journalism) but to Bill Monroe it was pure, simple, humble and deep LOVE. About 2300 people of the same spirit were there and many more were there in spirit.

Carter was laid to rest in a cemetery which can be seen from the window of his mother's home.

Buck Owens, a great Country and Western artist called Fay McGinnis, the International President of the Stanley's fan club, and said that in his heart he never forgot the fact that this man, Carter Stanley had encouraged him when he so greatly needed it. That was the way of Carter Stanley. Mike Seeger came in from New York to be there as did many others who knew and loved this man.

As one might well expect from Carter on a death bed, came a request from Carter that Ralph continue in the music. Ralph will have a very difficult time doing that - the problems are too great to pass off quickly, and they are more than any fan could ever realize. But,..... Ralph will continue because he has to - he comes from the self same stock and he has the self same spirit and light - people need you and your music Ralph. Carter gave himself because he cared for people and you, Ralph, will make music for these people now. We all pray that you will find the strength, the courage and all that it will take to continue bringing us our beloved Bluegrass music. By Pete Richardson for Bluegrass Lovers everywhere.

— A Message from the President of the A.B.S. on the passing of Carter Stanley —

WITH GREAT REGRET AND SADNESS I AM WRITING THIS NOTE. ON DECEMBER FIRST, ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT SPOKESMEN OF BLUEGRASS PASSED AWAY IN THE BRISTOL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN BRISTOL, TENNESSEE; THIS MAN WAS CARTER STANLEY. BORN AND RAISED IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY OF VIRGINIA, CARTER STANLEY SANG TRUE TO THE TRADITIONAL MOUNTAIN STYLE FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS, MAKING NUMEROUS RECORDS AND CREATING A SINGING IDIOM WHICH WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED. ALONG WITH HIS YOUNGER BROTHER RALPH, CARTER STANLEY SPREAD THE BLUEGRASS AND TRADITIONAL SOUND TO MANY AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES, AND ANY PERSONS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE SEEN AND HEARD THEM MAY CONSIDER THEMSELVES TRULY FORTUNATE. HAVING A REPRESENTATIVE COLLECTION OF STANLEY BROTHERS ALBUMS NOW IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY. THE WORLD MAY NOT NOTICE THE PASSING OF CARTER STANLEY, BUT THE TRUE BLUEGRASS LOVER WILL. AND INSIDE HIS HEART, THE BLUEGRASSER WILL FEEL SADDENED BUT EVEN MORE DEDICATED TO BLUEGRASS MUSIC. AS PRESIDENT, I FEEL THAT THE AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY SHOULD RIGHTLY DEDICATE THIS ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN TO THE MEMORY OF CARTER STANLEY, ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED OF ALL BLUEGRASS VOCALISTS. MAY HIS MEMORY LIVE FOREVER.

David W. Teeter, President
AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY

Dave — This issue of the Bluegrass Bulletin is so dedicated as you have beautifully expressed it.

— The Editor

A New Year's Resolution!

You know, it takes a long time and a great deal of effort (not to mention the financial sacrifice involved by the editor) to put into motion such a thing as you are now holding in your hand - THE BLUEGRASS BULLETIN, and the establishment of a Society like the AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY.

I truly hope that all of our members will realize that it is of the utmost importance that they publicize the whole endeavor and actively seek NEW MEMBERS for the Society so that we may continue what we have started.

I think we have a wonderful thing in all this and I hope that you feel the same way. So, dear Bluegrassers - won't you make a New Years Resolution RIGHT NOW and act on it like PRONTO to build up our membership. You can do it like no one else can - spread the word and ACTIVELY SEEK NEW MEMBERS.

You will find an entire sheet of applications for the ABS in this issue - so tear it out and cut them and get them filled in and sent in right away with the dues. \$3.00 per year.

How about it friends - will you help??????

"On The Scene" By Norm Carlson

While home for Thanksgiving vacation, I had the chance to see the Doc Williams show when it played in Frewsburg, N. Y. Doc and Williams and his Border Riders are not a Bluegrass group (In fact the show is not strictly a country music show, but includes comedy skits, philosophy and poetry readings.) but they do carry bluegrass influences and represent an extremely interesting synthesis of styles.

Andrew (Doc) Williams is an interesting personality with strong unique ideas about country music. Early in the show he commented about Country and Western music, "I don't know if you could call some of it country & western any more," at which point I initiated a round of applause. Later, in personal conversation, repeated his opposition to modern country music but explained he had added a drum to his band because, "you have to change with the times some, if you want people to listen to your music." His objections to modern country music center on the song topics as much as the musical composition. Doc is rigidly Victorian regarding songs dealing with love triangles and shows featuring risque jokes. In his opinion, social and economic conditions in the South have produced a condition in which the lowest levels of society can afford and want two wives. He further stated that those who sing about infidelity tend to live that way. Doc reads editorial and poetic pieces that fit his philosophy and goes to considerable effort to advertise his show as clean family entertainment. It seems remarkable that despite all this concern with a clean show, the humor is more vulgar in some respects than any other show I have seen.
(continued next page)

Yes - we will Trade!

We have received some inquiries about the possibility of trading an instrument for personalized tape lessons. We realize that some are not in a position financially to take these lessons, but nevertheless need them. Therefore, we will be glad to accept a musical instrument that you may have that you would be willing to trade in for lessons on Banjo, Guitar or Mandolin.

Write to us and describe the instrument and send along a photo of the instrument if you can. We will give you, at the rate of \$7.00 per lesson, that number of lessons which would meet the trade value of the instrument. In other words, if you have a Guitar which would be worth say \$70.00 to us, we will give you ten lessons on the instrument of your choice (of Banjo, Guitar or Mandolin).

And too, if you don't have an instrument, but do have something else of value that we can use or sell, we will trade lessons for that also. At any rate - write us and we will help you as much as we can. Also remember that we offer the best trades for your old instrument on the purchase of a NEW VEGA.

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Doc's music is distinctly Northern, with strong Canadian influence. He is a conscious folk artist and occasionally tells the background of his songs, where he learned them, or, if they are new songs, how they came to be written. He picks a guitar very well and very vigorously. His voice is deep, strong, and pleasing.

Marion Martin, the blind accordeonist who has been with Doc most of his career, contributes one of the most essential elements of the Doc Williams sound. The accordeon also constitutes most of the Canadian element.

Smokey Pleacher is another regular in the band. He is the most interesting clown I have seen in any band and must be one of the most remarkably talented side men alive. It is absolutely astounding to hear how low he can sing and suddenly switch to a falsetto that could easily be mistaken for a woman's voice. He can also sing straight or do a brilliant high tenor for bluegrass style harmony. In addition he can produce a variety of weird gurgles and sputs and the best train whistle imitation I have heard. His contortable face and blank looks are themselves enough to make him a good comic. He now usually plays drums but can do a good job on guitar, old-time banjo, and even fiddle.

Chickie Williams, Doc's wife plays bass and sings with Doc. Her voice is sweet and feminine rather than the strong mountain woman voice (such as Molly O'Day or Wilma Lee). She does best on old sentimental and heart songs.

Fred Johnson contributes the bluegrass element to the band. I went to school with Fred but did not know him very well at that time. Both he and his brother are fanatic bluegrass fans and can play all the instruments. In this show, Fred played banjo most of the time, mostly as backing. Part of the time he played dobro. In my opinion his style is a little too fast to take advantage of the beautiful smoothness the instrument is capable of. Fred also played fiddle on a few numbers. This resulted in some of the best and most bluegrass numbers of the whole program yet also gave an interesting Canadian touch, interacting with the accordeon.

This account could easily give the impression that the Border Riders are a miscegenation of old-time country and semi-country, modern country, and bluegrass. In reality, the Northern tradition does include these aspects. American folk and country music differs from area to area in the South, but people tend to forget this patchwork of local styles continues into Canada. Doc Williams is a creative and individualistic artist. He has forged his own style that is usually if not always well integrated.

The Adventures of "Curley" By Carol Ann Gawle

Once upon a time in a beautiful forest (probably just around the corner from you) there lived a pretty little tree by the name of Curley Maple. He wasn't anything spectacular mind you - just your ordinary, run-of-the-mill pretty little tree. He grew up tall and straight next to his dad, a strong giant of a tree, and beneath the gently protective, loving branches of his beautiful mother. So he got just about the right amount of rain, and sun, and nourishment that all growing trees should get. Then, one day at about the time of year when the young tree was feeling his oats (or should I say, sprouts) some men came into the forest. They went right over to Curley's dad and began to cut him down! Well! Curley wanted to pull up his roots out of the ground and chase them away, but his dad shouted to him "Don't worry son, I've been waiting and hoping for a long time and I finally have my wish! Be good to Mother." His wish? What was that? Then, as they placed his father on a long, long trailer, Curley heard one man say, "A fine mast for the new yacht." So that was it! He saw his father holding his branches proud and high (not one leaf dragged on the ground) and he knew he just had to follow in his dad's root-prints!

Time went on, and Curley reached tree-adolescence. (In other words, he was tree-teen.) He was very popular. Parties were always being held in his branches. Yet he was still unhappy. No men had come back since, looking for another mast. In fact, one day, he got the fright of his life when men from the local toothpick factory came, and one of them looked straight at Curley! "What a horrible fate for a tree", he shuddered. He kept his branches quite close for a long time after that - just in case. One day, he said to his mother, "Why don't I ever get chosen for a mast, or a door to a mansion, or even a Christmas tree like Joe Pine?" John Birch, (who was leaning to the right at the time) happened to overhear Curley talking to his mom and snickered, "They only pick the tallest trees for masts, the strongest for mansion doors, and the most special evergreens for Christmas trees. You'll probably end up as a picture frame - heh, heh!" Curley's mom told him not to pay attention. John was still smarting because the Forest Ranger had just planted a row of Crimson Maples next to him.

So Curley just waited, and waited. Suddenly, as he was daydreaming about being a new flagpole atop the Empire State Building, two men came up to him and said, "Hey - just what we've been looking for!", and they started to cut him down. "Wait! Wait!" he screamed. "What as I going to be?" But the men didn't answer - the chopping made too much noise. They put Curley in a big truck and took him to a small building on the outskirts of town. Then they began to transform Curley.

They started to make him slimmer and slimmer. He practically felt naked without his bark. Curley decided he wasn't going to be anything but a common salad bowl when the man

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began to take his wood and shape it into a circle - layer on layer. Then they took a long slim part of Curley's wood and kept sanding it and sanding it. They drilled four little holes in the top and one in his side. They put little metal strips along the length of him at carefully measured intervals. They put finish after finish on him, carefully sanding between coats. He couldn't imagine what he was! Into the 5 holes they had drilled, the men placed 5 metal pegs with gears to turn them. Then they attached the salad bowl part of him to the slim length of his wood. They took a piece of very thin material and stretched it so very tight over the bowl. "I'm a drum" Curley thought. He dreaded the prospect of being beaten daily with two sticks - and all that noise! The man did something Curley couldn't figure out. He began attaching strings - long metal ones - to Curley's pegs. He plunked and tightened, until he seemed satisfied with the sound. Curley felt so strange. The sound vibrated throughout his wood. The man mumbled something about "Fine tone" - but what did it mean? He didn't have a chance to figure it out because they shut him up in a box with latches on it. Not that it was uncomfortable - it was all lined with a nice, plush carpet. It was so soft it reminded Curley of the soft, grassy slope on which he once grew. Then, as suddenly as it was shut - the box opened! A man lifted Curley ever so gently from his new bed. The man whistled - a long low whistle. "What an instrument, If it sounds as good as it looks, I'll take it!" Then he held Curley close and began to pluck his strings - but not like the first man did. This man was using both hands - and it felt marvelous. Curley was making beautiful music. He tingled all over. "I don't know what I am, but I sure like it!" said Curley. "What a great Bluegrass Banjo this will be", said the man. "You've got a deal, mister." Curley went with the banjo-playing man and he travels all over the country. He's so very very happy and proud, and he sings all day -- "I'm a Banjo - a ringing, swingin', 5 string, Bluegrass Banjo! Listen to me everybody!" And he plunked happily ever after.

THE END?

Being, for a number of years, and in more than a couple of areas, of the country, I was employed as what used to be called a "Staff Announcer" on radio. I also was employed by a television station somewhere in the midst of my radio positions.

I would like, first of all, to give many of you who do not yet know it, a glimpse into the job of the "staff announcer" and about 95 percent of what are known today as "DJ's" is, what it involves and what he has to do to keep his job and what latitude he has in playing what he wants and "ad libbing" as he wants. The DJ in (as I said) about 95% of the cases is a man who works "alone". He is couped up in a small room called the "board" from which all programming stems into the antenna. In the Board room is the long console with a myriad of knobs and knife switches, mercury switches, tape recorder activators, and all of the knobs and buttons necessary to bring the program to you. Because radio stations cannot afford (again in about 95% of the cases) to have a very large staff of people on the payroll (they are not really needed) the DJ is the jolly humorous person (he really isn't) only about a 10th of his movements. While records are playing he is cue-ing up the next record (cue-ing up means that he puts the record on the turntable not in use at the time and places the needle on the record and runs it to the fraction of an inch away from the "sound beginning". The record sits in this fashion until he is ready to "spin" or play it - then he simply lets the switch start the playing.) So, he is busy looking over his "log" (which is a sheet of paper upon which is written a schedule of events. In most small stations (regardless of the wattage) the log is only a list of announcements which have been paid for or announcements "in the public interest" "Buy Bonds", "Give to the Heart Fund", "Save the Children Federation" and stuff like that which the station is required to give some air time to. They cannot voluntarily refuse to play "public Service" but they must play some (a specified amount by the FCC). So, here is the DJ looking up the next spot announcement, cue-ing up the record he is going to play next, and if he is working for a network station he is also engaged in monitoring the network to tape record programs that he will play at another time or he is watching the clock to bring the network in on the local airway just as the net starts. (Sometimes he is late). Then, most of the DJ's also have to run down the hall while a record is on the turntable entertaining you, and into what they call the "newsroom" (which is really a spot in the hall or a very small cubbyhole of a room which houses one, two, three or perhaps more "teletype machines"). The teletype machines put out 5 minute summaries of news, special features, and 15 minute summaries and a lot of junk and sometimes a special announcement. He will grab the long line of paper from the machine, which may have been going for hours without having the paper removed, (looks like a roll of kitchen paper towels unrolled on the floor). He grabs this and, if he has time, he will begin ripping out whatever he needs at the time (like a 5 minute summary of news) or he will take the whole roll back to the "board room" with him to sort it inbetween records - and by the way sometimes he doesn't make it back in time and you hear the scratch, scratch, scratch of a record which has run out of time. Race here and race there, and sounds like he is fresh as a daisy when he "opens" the mike to talk to all those "folks in radio land".

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Now, in the midst of all this mayhem, in will walk an "artist" who is dropping in on his way to a personal engagement or something like that. If the artist is a country or Bluegrass artist (for instance) and the programming at the time is not country or Bluegrass the DJ or some other person who is around will tape the interview for playing later. Or if he is in his program at the time he will take him to the board room with him and he will talk to him in a very uncomfortable circumstance. They talk about where the artist is going and in just a few moments they will get to the reason for the artist's visit - the bomb is dropped (accidentally on purpose) - my newest release (his newest or only record). He might give the DJ a copy of it. If he doesn't have one with him (which would be a rare situation) the DJ will sometimes act like he is giving him one. Now, since it is good for the overall public view that the public has of the DJ, the DJ will act like the artist is an old friend or near that. They will use first names and when the point of the record is made the artist will begin looking for a way out of the board room, and on to the next station in the area.

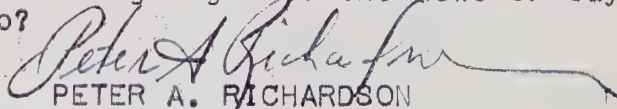
It doesn't do the artist any harm nor the DJ for these little commercial pitches to be made at your expense (because no music is being played during this free commercial pitch for the record). It is a worthy encounter for the artist and for the DJ - it gives the station and the program "class". Imagine, the great Johnny Blowhard just walked into the station and here he is, etc, etc, etc, ad nauseum. (until it makes you sick).

Also, I think that it should be pointed out that I never found one of these "artists" who just "dropped by" to be any more of a human being than myself or any of you. They are not gods - they are working people. Their music takes a back seat in the interview except for the record plug. Talk about everything but the music itself. They will drop names of other artists (which also gives the artist "class" - you know - you are great if you know someone who is great.)

I am waiting for the day when "artists" walk into radio stations without a new release to give to the DJ or a new record to talk about and just sit down and talk about the music while they play some if it - comments on the music - not, mind you, on the record company or any of that - the song, the emotion in it conveying - what the emotional response of the artist is to it - (especially when the visiting artist has not recorded it) and that type of thing. Now, I don't want to give anyone the idea that some artists do not do this sort of thing, because they do. Those who will do it on a small town or wattage station are few and far between, but you can hear them drop in for hours on a station like WSM in Nashville, but this is another horse of another color. If you can get into the WSM studio (one of the few places where the DJ doesn't usually work a console or board while he is on the air - but some times does or has to) you are a fortunate person to be given the opportunity to sell yourself to the public nationwide.

A little more of this long visit - music talk - from the artists who are well known would be a boon to the audience.

One more thing with a bluegrass touch before I close this article. Carol Ann Gawle told me the other day that she listens patiently to the "Country and Western" stations - waiting for a Bluegrass record - very few, if any, are played EXCEPT WHEN THE STATION IS COMING TO THE END OF THE SHOW AND THE THEME IS USUALLY GOOD BLUEGRASS BANJO, GUITAR OR SOMETHING ROUSING - A BREAKDOWN WHICH IS VERY MUCH BLUEGRASS. But you only hear a few seconds of it and the announcer is talking all the time over the music - going into the news or saying goodbye. How about more Bluegrass during the program too?


PETER A. RICHARDSON

SORRY NO TAB THIS MONTH, RESUME NEXT MONTH, HOW ABOUT ONE FROM YOU?

Sorry but starting January 1, 1967, they will not let us mail yours without your zip code. Please drop us a card and give it to us so we don't have to spend several days looking them up. Thanks.

We now have members in most states of the U.S. plus Canada, England, Belgium, Switzerland, Australia, Sweden and APO addresses going all over the world.

For ABS members only, we have back copies of November 1965, January, February, March, November and December of 1966 for 10¢ each, first come, first served.

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In November of 1965 the Bluegrass Bookshelf gave birth to a new organization for the benefit of those who play the various Bluegrass instrument, those who just like to listen to Bluegrass music and those who have just begun to learn one of these instruments. We gave it a name: THE AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY. The purpose is to promote and preserve traditional old-time Bluegrass music.

As a spokesman sheet for our society, The Bluegrass Bookshelf publishes a small paper each month containing tabs and articles from members as well as news of the Bluegrass world. Specials are offered from the Bookshelf to members only each month. We would like to hear from you.

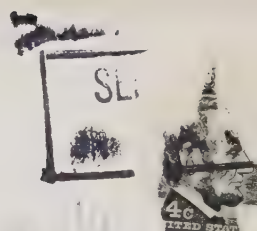
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8/67



The Bluegrass Bulletin

Volume No. 2

February, 1967

No. 4

Sick?—Who is, actually? —Man or Music?

The most often encountered complaint concerning "country music" per se, or, if one does not enjoy "country music", his reason, generally given, is that "it talks about the sadness of life and grief of people, etc., etc.," they go on and on about what is wrong with it.

Bluegrass must be considered, socially, as a part of what is generally called "country music", because it is heard on country oriented programs and stations, or played by country DJ's. If you hold a stringed instrument in your hand, brandish a fiddle bow, or wear a ten gallon hat and a pair of boots, right away it is "country music" to the person of the general public who might chance see you or hear your music. If it is a stringed instrument, then it follows that you are either "folk" or "country". They seem to distinguish between these two idioms, but Bluegrass doesn't seem to find a place of special emphasis with them. It is "country". Alright, so we must live with that, but all is not bleak or dark for Bluegrass.

However, I have not taken to type tonight to talk about Bluegrass obtaining a special place in the field of entertaining music, but to approach the problem of how people grossly mis-interpret or mis-understand their own lives and life generally. (Some who might read this and if they despise "country music" they will probably say at this point that I don't understand music generally.) But the point is that most people curse that which they do not understand. I would also observe that if country music does indeed (which is true) does sing and interpret human misery and life's problems, those who tend to dislike it are usually those who do not like to face the truth of life and find it unbearable to THINK about and to deal effectively with life and the pain which composes so much of it.

If all we can sing about or seek to interpret in entertainment is the glad, the happy, the nonsensical, the (actually) UNREAL aspects of life, then we will never make friends with that part of life which is the greatest threat to us - PAIN, LOSS, and related subjects.

Yes, the country song and the Bluegrass song sings about these things, but it does sing about the joyous also. They are well mixed emotions and therefore I think that country and Bluegrass music (and folk music also) express in song and in instrument interpretation, the stuff of what life is made. It follows, then, if we sing about the whole of life, that our music reflects, probably better than any other, the whole of man's experience. And a man who will only listen to and appreciate music which touches on the glad and happy and the UNREAL wish is only a half person. He lies to himself that such things as broken hearts and infidelity exist, not.

It may be fodder for the psychiatrist, or grist for his mill, to say this, but I will venture it anyway - A MAN WITH A BROKEN HEART SOMEHOW ENJOYS AND FINDS UNIVERSAL COMPANY IN LISTENING TO A SONG WHICH SPEAKS OF HIS MISERY. He can see that others feel as he does. He might even learn to laugh at his misery, and if he can do that, he will be healthier. And I am, for one, all for health. Many a country song which sings about deeper miseries has not only sung about the problem, but it has also sung about a possible remedy and many have found the answer to their emotion problems from the corner juke box which plays the music called "country" or "bluegrass". If you have deduced from this that I am saying that country and bluegrass music is THERAPY, you are correct - I am saying exactly that. And, too some will resist treatment without good reason. Such a person shouldn't have to bear a lot of the pain that he is indeed bearing, but no M.D. can force a person to take the medicine that he needs. Therefore, in conclusion to this editorial, let me say that the whole flock of people who find our music distasteful and morose, would be much better off if they would face up to life a little more by listening to the glad and the sad of country and Bluegrass.

Pete Richardson, Editor

Let's Build it up, man - Now!

I would like to say here that the Society is growing and it is growing fast. Most of our initial or charter members have paid their membership fee for another year, and newer members are coming into our fold daily. I could say something like: "HELP THE SOCIETY TO GROW" but it should be more realistic if I said to you: "GIVE YOURSELF A HAND, YOU ARE THE SOCIETY AND IF YOU WANT TO GROW, GET MORE MEMBERS." So, why not get busy and enlist your friends. The Bluegrass Bookshelf has always helped the Society and will continue to do so by printing the BULLETIN when the membership fees do not pay the bill, but continue we shall. We might be a bit late now and then, but we shall continue.

Where is all the Metal?

A whole lot (a heap) of you have ordered items of metal like (especially) National fingerpicks for Banjo and Dobro. We have been slow in supplying them to you, but the problem has existed with the manufacturer in his inability to obtain the metal needed to make the picks. You might consider some sources which get priority on metals during a time of war and you might be pretty close to understanding why it is difficult to get the picks you need. We can now fill the orders (at least now) and if you need them I suggest you order them now without delay for there is no telling when the metal will be scarce again.

YOUR BLUEGRASS BULLETIN IS A BIT LATE THIS MONTH, PROBLEM BEING IN NEEDED VACATIONS AND IN MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH OUR PRINTING PRESS. WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY FUTURE DELAYS, BUT IF THEY DO OCCUR, THEY ARE ONLY TEMPORARY AND WE WILL GET THE SHEET OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Thanks.

Lessons anyone?

We, at the BOOKSHELF are having very good success with our tape lessons on Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin. If you are not progressing as fast or as deeply as you would like, let us urge you to give this type of learning a try with at least one lesson. The lessons are \$7.00 per lesson and you take them one at a time. There is no long term or high financial initial contract or anything like that. Give it a try and you will see that learning to play one of these instruments is not at all a formidable task. You can do it with some professional help. A book can take you only so far. Also, if you don't have the money to put out for the lessons and feel that you would like to take them and feel you need them, how about trading the BOOKSHELF some instrument that you might have around which is not doing you any particular good right now. Learn to play one instrument and trade the other one for lessons on the instrument of your choice. We will give you what the instrument is worth in lessons. Just drop us a line, let us know what your problem is and what you have to trade and I feel sure that we will be able to work out something. DON'T PUT THIS OFF OR YOU WILL FORGET IT. WRITE TODAY AND GET BUSY at learning to play your Bluegrass instrument !

Like The DOBRO ?

Those of you who are keenly interested in the DOBRO should write to a fellow Dobro player and aspirant: JIM MCCOY, 7360 Hurley Drive, Beaumont, Texas 77708. Jim is very much interested in the Dobro and would enjoy hearing from you and exchanging tapes, but you would also enjoy Jim....He is a most interesting guy who loves Bluegrass and does a heap to publicize it, promote it, and promote the AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY. Write him!

How about a letter or card?

I know that with our large mailing list that many of you have opinions and suggestions which would be enjoyed by our readers and your fellow society members. Why not write us a line or two. What are you anyway - a man or a mouse - come on fellow SQUEEK-UP!

SPECIALS for the A.B.S.

As SPECIALS FOR SOCIETY MEMBERS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1967 ONLY - how about us giving you a straight 10 percent discount on ANYTHING in our new catalog. The new catalog has been mailed to you by now.

Reviewing Records with Dave Deeter - President, American Bluegrass Society

This record review column is based on a five-star system; a full five stars signifies a superior record, four stars for excellent, three stars for average, two stars for below average, but listenable, one star for very poor. Each side of a record (long playing album) will be rated separately.

The purpose of this column will be to determine the Bluegrass excellence of a record and not its commercial value. Also, only Bluegrass records or Bluegrass related records will be reviewed - since this is a publication for persons who like bluegrass. There are many fine country/western albums, but reviewing them is not the purpose of this column.

Each review represents only the opinion of the reviewer and not necessarily the opinion of the society. Readers are invited to question these opinions, and they are invited to recommend the reviewing of certain records (if the reviewer has access to the record).

APPALACHIAN SWING - THE KENTUCKY COLONELS - WORLD PACIFIC 1821

Side 1: Clinch Mountain Backstep - Nine Pound Hammer - Listen to the Mockingbird - Wild Bill Jones - Billy in the Low Ground - Lee Highway SIDE 2: I am a Pilgrim - Prisoner's Song - Sally Goodin - Faded Love - John Henry - Flat Fork

RATING *****/*****

This is a most excellent record in every sense of the word. My copy was quite warped for a new record, but was nonetheless quite fine. This is an instrumental album, but unlike so many other instrumental albums, this one is not weak. Roland White plays about the finest Mandolin I've heard and is extremely smooth. His younger brother Clarence, is an exceptionally creative flat picker. His solos and breaks are by far the highlight of this album, particularly "I Am a Pilgrim". Billy Ray plays some fine five-string Banjo: "Flat Fork" is a fascinating banjo number with a mixture of Scruggs style and Keith picking and is really fine. The other members of the group are Leroy Mack on Dobro, Bobby Slone (a left-handed fiddler) and Roger Bush on Bass (and banjo on "Wild Bill Jones"). Words can't praise this album enough. I highly recommend this record for purchase (Issued in 1964, but rather obscure).

THE ANGELS ARE SINGING - THE STANLEY BROTHERS - COLUMBIA HARMONY Mono HL 7377

Stereo HS 11177

SIDE 1: The Angels Are Singing (in Heaven Tonight) - It's Never Too Late - The Old Home - The Fields Have Turned Brown - The Wandering Boy SIDE 2: Have You Someone (in Heaven Awaiting) - Let Me Be Your Friend - Too Late To Cry - Little Class of Wine - I'm a Man of Constant Sorrow

RATING *****/*****

(Continued on next page)

REVIEWING RECORDS WITH DAVE TEETER (continued from previous page)

This album is another fabulous re-issue of early Stanley Brothers recordings and is highly recommended for purchase. If you've never heard any of the early recordings by Carter and Ralph then you should buy this one. This album is very strong and is much better than any of their recent recordings since 1958. Full instrumentation is heard instead of George Shuffler (the owner of the deadeast guitar strings in the world today). The singing is great, especially the title song and "The Fields Have Turned Brown".

BLUEGRASS COUNTRY - RED ALLEN AND THE KENTUCKIANS - COUNTY 704

SIDE 1: Summertime Is Past and Gone - Whose Shoulder Will You Cry On - Purple Heart - Are You Waiting Just for Me - Heaven SIDE 2: That's How I can Count On You - My Baby's Gone - I Heard My Mother Call My Name In Prayer - I'm on My Way Back To The Old Home - What About You - Out On The Ocean

RATING ***/****

Red Allen teams up with the Yates Brothers, Porter Church, and Richard Greene to produce a very fine album in the Bluegrass vein. Red is truly one of the finest Bluegrass singers in the business today and this record is certainly up to his usual. Porter Church plays a smooth and driving banjo and is heard to a greater advantage on side 2, particularly in "Out On The Ocean". That song, incidentally is a new one by Red and is recorded on this album for the first time. Richard Greene, who now plays fiddle for Bill Monroe, does a fine job on this album although he's not heard much. In addition, Wayne Yates picks some fine Mandolin. The songs in this album cover a wide range of Bluegrass and country songs, all treated in Red's Bluegrass manner. Two of the more interesting songs are "My Baby's Gone" originally recorded by the Louvin Brothers, and "Whose Shoulder Will You Cry On", originally recorded by Kitty Wells. The songs are taken from the repertoires of such performers as Flatt and Scruggs, Jim and Jesse, Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin, Ernest Tubb, and Johnny and Jack, in addition to the songs mentioned above.

All in all, this album is very typical of Red Allen, and if you're a Red Allen fan, then I advise you to purchase this record.

LARRY RICHARDSON & RED BARKER AND THE BLUE RIDGE BOYS COUNTY 702

SIDE 1: Let Me Fall - You Left Me So Blue - More Pretty Girls Than One - I Don't Love Nobody - Paul and Silas - John Henry SIDE 2: Pain In My Heart - Little Pal - Liberty - Wild Over Me - Sad and Lonesome Day - My Home's Across The Blue Ridge Mountains

RATING ***/****

This album is one of the few made by Larry Richardson, and as such is a necessary record for collectors. These musicians sing and play Bluegrass in the old style; high tense tenor, solid banjo picking, good country fiddle (Buddy Pendleton is one of the finest), and a hard-driving intensity characteristic of fine Bluegrass. The vocal highlights of this album are the songs "Pain In My Heart", written by Larry Richardson and Bobby Osborne, and "Sad and Lonesome Day". Larry's high tenor is fine and his five-string work is good. The Mandolin is rather weak on this album, as is the singing of Red Barker. The Blue Ridge Boys aren't polished like so many groups, but this facet adds rather than detracts from the overall sound. The recording level is below average, but the album is quite enjoyable.

Keith Tyler Talks a Little Bluegrass - Loudly!

(Keith Tyler does indeed know the beginnings of Bluegrass, and he knows Dobro well. Keith has written a manual of instruction on Dobro "by ear" and it is available from the Book Shelf at \$4.98 per copy - A tape to demonstrate the manual is \$4.95)

Dear Bluegrassers, To me, Bluegrass is not something new nor something that I discovered in Bill Monroe or Flatt and Scruggs. As a farm boy, I grew up in the thirties listening to the real McCoy on the radio. In the late thirties and early forties, I collected, as my school boy finances allowed, some of the original releases by the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers, Monroe Brothers Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe and many others. Even then the music had to be all string and preferably dobro, banjo and mandolin to suit me. But World War II and the years following brought the electric guitar and all the other forms of deterioration of country music. I even have a record of Bill Monroe featuring an Accordion! How 'bout that? With my type of country music seemingly lost to the past I quit buying records and even sold my old Dobro, which I had played in school days. But years later the "cream did rise to the top", so as to speak, and good old Bill had saved Bluegrass and new groups were forming to play it. (continued on the next page)

KEITH TYLER TALKS A LITTLE BLUEGRASS -LOUDLY! (continued)

It was a while ago again - you should see my collection now of bluegrass and re-issue material! I picked up an old Dobro from Shot Jackson and recently acquired another new one.

But something seems to be wrong again, already. The other day I read, in a bluegrass publication, that drums had become a "necessary evil" in bluegrass bands! Now, really have they? Sure some groups have added drums, but we can stop that, fellow bluegrassers! Let's boycott their records until they drop the drums and write them our opinions. If we play bluegrass, let's keep drums out of our groups.

Another sign of trouble is the sound of Lester and Earl. First they dropped the Mandolin, although they never did really feature it strongly enough in the first place. But, now it's that horrible howling harmonica, which seems to have more prominence than Earl or Josh. Don't get me wrong, I like a harmonica, in its place, but a mandolin makes better 'grass.

Then, for convenience in travel, some groups use an electric bass. Personally, I'd rather have no bass at all than an electric. Rather than an electric bass, let's add another big old Martin flat top if there isn't room on top for the bull.

A music type, out of the past, which seems to have no place today, but which is basically bluegrass in my ear, unless one insists on the Scruggs style banjo and full bluegrass band, is the small string groups of two or three instruments. Remember the Monroe Brothers, Blue Sky Boys, Roy Hall, Darby and Tarleton and many others, which often featured just guitar and mandolin, guitar and banjo, guitar and Dobro or maybe a combination of three of them? It is often hard to get enough interested players together for a full band, but two or three can make some pretty good 'grass and lend a little variety, while using all bluegrass instruments.

Let's keep bluegrass clean and pure, fellows, and play and promote it forever.

KEITH TYLER

(Editors note: Fine job tiger Keith - sick em' - you are so right about the drums and the electric bass. If we are going to use all that electricity why not just take canned music (records) with us and we can just "mouth" or pantomime the songs and music like the rock and roll groups do on TV. Also your point about the small groups is excellent - many will not want to call a lot of this bluegrass but this is something that is factual and it is from the past - its all traditional bluegrass music - even the strumming/trailing 5 string.) DOE THINGS CAN BE ARGUED BUT THIS IS FACTS OF THE PAST - ACCEPT IT FRIENDS.

Unfortunately, I can't see a show every month, so frequently I will have discussion of general topics in this column. This month I'll talk about several good books and one periodical issue that are important to those interested in country music. All of these mention bluegrass or bluegrass artists to various extents.

The first hardcover book on the subject of country music in general, was L. Gentry's Encyclopedia and History of Country, Western, and Gospel Music, published in 1961 by a firm in Nashville. The title is misleading. The work is only one volume, 300 pages long. It consists of 37 articles reprinted from popular magazines from 1904 to 1958. Most of the articles do deal with country music. They represent most possible attitudes an author could take favorable, condescending, and objective. Being popular press articles, they contain much general discussion and few specific facts. I would say this anthology includes over half of the articles on country through 1953 that can be located in the Readers Guide to Periodical Literature and other common indexed Journals. The other half of the book contains short biographies and selected song listings of over 325 artists. These are incomplete and often inaccurate. A similar assemblage of paragraph-length histories of major radio and dance programs completes the work. The book is sold for about \$5.00. I obtained my copy from Jimmie Skinner Music Center in 1962. It is now out of print and much in demand by collectors. It contains the best mention of bluegrass of any of the three full books.

In 1965 Billy Charles Malone completed his 500 page Ph.D. thesis, A History of Commercial Country Music in the United States, 1920-1964. This has not been published but an electronically copied paper back copy can be obtained from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, for about \$25.00. Orders must specify number 65-8070.

This is the first serious lengthy study of country music. Malone made a vigorous attempt to assemble the facts and comment on their causes and meaning. Not too surprisingly he was hindered by lack of access to some important sources. His writing indicated a probable recent acquaintance with the subject and the absence of extended exposure to many historic but presently unavailable records. Despite this, the thesis is an outstanding work. It contains a wealth of hard facts, all referenced and highly accurate in contrast to Gentry publication. But the synthesis - the discussion of background factors, social and historical contexts, and the relationships of the facts to each other - is an even more important contribution. (continued on next page)

ON THE SCENE WITH NORM CARLSON - (Continued from previous page)

All phases of country music are covered with good balance. Bluegrass is covered in half of one of the ten chapters. The volume is not intended for mass production or wide consumption in the electronically produced form. With its small triple spaced pages, it is not a good buy except for the serious student of Country music (including bluegrass).

The Country Music Story, published last September by Bobbs-Merrill, 4300 W. 62nd St., Indianapolis, seems to have first been conceived as a loosely written account filling in between a collection of newly discovered pictures. By the time of publication it had become the best single available source of both facts and pictures of country music history. Robert Shelton, author of the text, has been folk music critic for the New York Times for many years. Despite the urban orientation, obvious in the quality of his writing, Shelton is strongly sympathetic to country music. So much so, in fact, that he makes several pointed rebuttals of some common unfounded criticisms. Burt Goldblatt, who supervised the pictures, is a renowned photographer, painter and designer. He included 368 photographs and reproductions of other artifacts of country music history.

The constant revelation of previously little known facts must surprise the most knowledgeable reader. The balance, informativeness, and coherence are superb. The pictures are of equal relevance and quality. One of the nine chapters is devoted to bluegrass.

This book of 256 pages is presently available for \$7.50. Anyone with any degree of interest in country music should own a copy.

An almost equally impressive source of information on country music is the special July-September "Hillbilly Issue" of the Journal of American Folklore. K. K. Wilgus' introduction points out the value of hillbilly music and the deplorable lack of previous study. Archie Green's fact packed, 3 appendixes, article with 65 references in 20 pages traces the origin of the term "hillbilly" and gives an intensely factual and complete (by present standards) account of the first recordings by the various pioneer companies (1922-25). Norman Cohen's article on the Skillet Lickers contains much of the same information as his series in Hoedown but also devotes attention to musical content and influences.

The most interesting article in the issue, in the view of most members of the American Bluegrass Society, would be "An Introduction to Bluegrass" By Mayne Smith. This is a modification of a masters thesis done at Indiana University. It covers history to an extent but emphasizes musical content and style, variations, influence of different bluegrass musicians, song content, show composition, band composition, and other stylistic matter. The writing is technical and terse and definitely slanted to those with a participant's knowledge of music. The article is 12 pages long.

Ed Kahn's "Hillbilly Music: Source and Resource" surveys printed sources of information and is of value to the serious student of country music and to anyone who is strongly dissatisfied with this present coverage. The issue concludes with "Current Hillbilly Recordings a Review Article" By D. K. Wilgus. This is an extremely valuable article. A vast number of current and recent albums, reissues, new material by rediscovered artists, and new material by regular commercial performers with traditional styles, are not only reviewed but are explained in such a way as to themselves present a history of country music. This is the most meaningful type of review. It places each record in its position in the career of the artist, indicates the style and tells the importance of the recordings in the context of preceding and subsequent recordings.

The entire issue with all the above articles can be obtained for \$2.00 from The American Folklore Society, Kenneth S. Goldstein, Bennett Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. Individual articles can be obtained free from the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles, California Zip Code 90024. Additional copies of any article or single copies of additional articles are 50¢ each.

NORM CARLSON

MARCH 16th - 17th and 18th THE FLORIDA FOLK FESTIVAL will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. National and local folk singers and dancers. Featured will be groups like THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, TOM PAXTON, MIKE SEEGAR, LEONDA LINDA KANE, THE FRATERNITY, THE VIP'S and many others. For more information and reservations write or call THE FLORIDA FOLK FOUNDATION 2319 Sea Island Drive, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Phone Area Code 305, no. 524-3130. The Festival will be held at George English Park - East Sunrise and Bayview in Ft. Lauderdale.

A FEW REMINDERS OF IMPORTANCE - IF YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER IS 53 through 80 IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO SEND IN YOUR YEARLY DUES. WHEN IT RUNS OUT WE WILL NOT SEND ANY FURTHER COPIES OF THE BULLETIN (we cannot send grace copies -we operate on a strict budget) ALSO - IF YOU HAVE MOVED PLEASE SEND US YOUR NEW ADDRESS. ALSO, LET US HAVE YOUR ZIP CODE - The post office now requires that we put zip codes on ALL MAIL. Use your Zip Code on all mail and you will receive your mail a whole lot sooner - believe it - it's a fact!

A CLOSING WORD FROM THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF - You will not make a better trade on a new Instrument anywhere - The Bookshelf extends the best trade possible and guarantees with us are just as good (if not better) as you will get in a local store. Everything is to your advantage in buying a new Banjo, Guitar or whatever from the Bookshelf- Write us today!

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BLUEGRASS BULLETIN

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No. 1

Bluegrass Instruments; craftsmanship, - sound, beauty, inlay, individuality, personality, etc....

It has probably been said many more times than a thousand, the phrase..... That Banjo (Guitar or whatever) is an extension of his right arm Those who have expressed that thought meant, of course, that the performer played so well and seemed to have such a familiarity with his instrument that it seemed to the audience that his instrument was indeed "an extension of his right arm", that is, a part of the performer himself. Of course it is not in a physical sense, but in an emotional and habitual sense it is vitally true. A performer comes to feel something for his instrument and feel something about his instrument both while he is performing as well as when he is home and the instrument in in the case, stand, or on the sofa. Many listeners do not have that thought I would suppose, (because many people use music as background for gabbing) (They wouldn't be prone to notice such familiarity.), but let me assure those of you who are predominantly listeners and fans, that performers who get themselves into their work, that this overstatement is true. Performers come to love their instrument, both the instrument in general (all Banjos, Guitars, Mandolins, etc.) and in the personal, individual sense that they love their own particular instrument. It is not only a tool to get a job done, it is something far more than all that, and it is the purpose of this editorial to make some of this feeling more clearly understood.

Performers (or just those who play for themselves alone) SEARCH diligently, and then some, for an instrument with better and more thorough care than most young men do in choosing a wife and helpmate. It is actually a romance of a type, and the honeymoon is also a part of the relationship. In the beginning one will not take too great a notice of nicks and flaws in the finish and other related things. Later on, when they have some time to look, they find all sorts of things that seem to them as "wounds" rather than imperfections. If the instrument is badly scarred, the new owner will think, at least inwardly, that the person who owned the instrument previously had no heart at all in treating the instrument in such a poor way. It is difficult, despite the age of the instrument, for them to comprehend how anyone could own such an instrument and be so insensitive to such things. They may even invoke a curse and project it outward to the previous owner aloud or in thought.

I am approaching this subject with the full awareness that some will call me a "romantic" with respect to Bluegrass and Instruments which play it. But, I recall hearing a man say that any man who continues to love his wife as a new bride was an incurable romantic. I will have to (being as I am) condemn that attitude as an insensitive one - a person who has lost all sense of value, love and emotion.

(continued on
next page)

BLUEGRASS INSTRUMENTS, CRAFTSMANSHIP - SOUND, BEAUTY, INLAY, (continued)

All men are not alike and neither are their women. And, too, all Banjoists or Guitarists are not alike and neither are their instruments. Some men and women are rather fickle people and lovers and the same is true of those who play all of these Bluegrass instruments. Men and women say that they love their spouse but they also find some conflicting emotions when it comes to other people of the opposite sex. The same thing is true of the Instrumental performer and his instrument. And this is the real crux of all this illogical conversation that we hear about this or that performer tells one person or group that he prefers a certain make and model of Banjo or Guitar, and then he tells another story to another individual or group. It is conflicting, and he is either lying, or else his emotions are playing tricks with him. Perhaps he is telling the truth on both occasions but feels a bit different on both occasions. Perhaps the performer owns a room full of instruments, i.e., 6 banjos, 4 guitars, etc., and some offer him a sound, surface beauty, tone or whatever that another does not. So one day the coffee for breakfast is terrible and he, feeling different than usual will be prone to use a different banjo than he used the day before. Really, it is usually a problem of not being able to say that as a Banjo per se he likes a certain one better than another. He likes one better than another for one sound, one surface beauty, one tone. He likes one for the comfort it gives him and for the surface beauty it represents. He is usually a fickle person who loves all of the banjos he owns and is not willing to part with any one of them. If he had to marry one of them for life and give up all the rest, he may find himself in the instrumental divorce court for the rest of his life as a continual thing. And, too, if most people who play these instruments were to treat marriage in the same way that he treats his mate, he would end up with several or more mates and be sent to jail for multiple marriages. However, since we have no instrumental courts in our land, the Banjo romantic is perfectly safe.

Recently, I asked a person who purchased an instrument from me, to put it along side a banjo of another make and compare the sound, tone, response, etc. In a few days he returned a report to me that he liked the one I sold him much better when playing "Foggy Mountain Breakdown", but preferred another make for playing "Maggie". So, you see, the whole thing revolves around the fact that each make as well as the particular model's in the make develop and represent a definite "character" and "personality". Banjos are more fickle, themselves, than any other instrument I know of. And if you are getting close to saying that Banjos don't have a soul, I can only say that your exposure to different instruments must be awfully small or nil. Banjos, because of the many different ways in which their tone may be altered, remain as the most dynamic and fickle instruments on the circuit. If you think a Banjo is just so much wood, metal and other elements you might consider the fact that you haven't listened to what your Banjo has been telling you. It will tell you when you need a new set of strings, it will tell you when it needs its resonator, it will tell you when you have a bad bridge, and it will tell you, among other things, that your dexterity is poor. I am not so sure that one day we might have Banjo, Guitar, String Bass, Mandolin and Dobro Psychiatrists. Perhaps you may have to go to the therapy session with your Banjo and receive simultaneous treatment.

Now, lets go on to this thing of craftsmanship. This element of construction is being so very much detailed to the assembly line that most instruments have no birthright. They are not given the individual hand treatment that they deserve. I believe it as a sin to construct a Banjo or Guitar, Mandolin or Dobro or Bass on an assembly line. To my own mind, there exists only one firm that still gives individual loving care to each instrument it turns out - VEGA. Some makes are made only to sell, and some few are made to be played and still a smaller number are made to be bought, played and loved - AND KEPT.

VEGA Instruments Are "Best for Bluegrass!"

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BLUEGRASS INSTRUMENTS - CRAFTSMANSHIP, SOUND, BEAUTY, INLAY, etc(Continued)

Now let us bring to a close this editorial, by speaking of the beauty of inlay and hand carving that we see nowadays only on the very old Banjos and Bluegrass Instruments. Those who used to cut, arrange and install, and sometimes improve on the pearl inlay, have disappeared from the scene because of a lack of appreciation for such things. People won't pay, or at least they have not shown that they would, for the artistic work that we see on the older instruments. I believe an instrument that a person is going to own and love, deserves to be dressed out in its best attire. Large block pearl inlays are nice and conservative and modern perhaps, but they will not compare with the ornate inlay work of the bygone days when people wanted their instruments to look good.

There is a revival in this area now, and more and more people are having their fingerboards and pegheads (or headstocks) inlayed with the more ornate and delicate mother of pearl inlay patterns. I applaud these people who show some heart. If you have never seen a VEGA Whyte Laydie No. 7 5 String which is about 75 to 80 years old you don't know how beautiful a Banjo can look.

Lets close all this up tonight by saying that a Bluegrass instrument is a personality; it has character and it deserves good, loving attention. Why don't you take a good look at your instrument today and see if you can't help the poor slave look a bit more like what you really feel for it.

Pete Richardson

"The Bluegrass Scene" by Norm Carlson, A.B.S.

BLUEGRASS IS YOUNG AND ALIVE. Because of this, those involved most deeply in it tend to forget that it is part of a much larger phenomenon with a long and interesting past. From time to time I'll be writing historical articles about bluegrass and its forebearers in this space. This month I'm talking about the history of one of the essential bluegrass instruments - the fiddle.

The remote ancestor of the fiddle probably originated in the middle ages in Europe. The earliest forms had from one to many strings and were of various shapes. The bow was really the shape of a bow with the string stretched across as in the bow and arrow. In about the tenth century the word fiddle became commonly applied to any of these instruments that were bowed rather than plucked in playing.

In the early Renaissance musical genius, like so many other forms, flowered first in Italy. As early as 1550, the form of fiddle we now know, the violin, was developed and the term fiddle tended to be restricted to this in English speaking countries. During the very early 18th century the design of the violin was fully perfected by Amati, Guarneri, and Stradivarius families of Cremona, Italy. These names, as well as that of Stainer, a German who worked slightly later, are seen on present fiddles indicating the copy of these original designs. I still copy these great craftsmen because their designs were perfect by physical and acoustical laws. Improvement is practically and theoretically impossible.

(continued on page 4)

IF THE PRESENT FORM OF THE BULLETIN HAS CAUGHT YOUR EYE AS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS TWO ISSUES, IT IS A RESULT OF COMPLAINT THAT THE PAGE WAS TOO WIDE AND THE LINE OF TYPE WAS TOO DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. I AGREE. AND, RATHER THAN GOING TO Lining AND COLUMNING, I PREFER TO PRINT IT ON THIS SIZE PAPER. THE CONTENTS ARE THE SAME, ONLY THE SHEET SHAPE AND SIZE IS DIFFERENT. YOUR COMMENTS ARE SOLICITED AND INVITED ON THE BULLETIN TO HELP MAKE IT AS GOOD A PAPER AS POSSIBLE.

THE BLUEGRASS SCENE - BY NORM CARLSON (continued from page 3)

The fiddle is the most perfect and most versatile of all musical instruments. This is seen in comparison to other instruments in the same family such as the Viola, bass, and Cello. Their dimensions are not so well proportioned and their sound not so loud or true.

It was in the 17th century that the fiddle began to reach the country people in the British Isles. The more primitive forms first, and later the perfected type. Soon after this we first clearly see the picture of the two separate forms of musical tradition that later became merged in the United States to produce our country music, including bluegrass. On the one hand we had the unaccompanied ballads which reached back into the middle ages or before. On the other hand we have the country dance tradition, the instrumental music which led directly to our mountain string bands and bluegrass.

It is difficult to say what instrumental music preceded the fiddle in Ireland, Scotland and England. Bagpipes were the most well known instrument. These were used by clan pipers for martial music. To what extent they were instruments of the people is a matter of controversy. In any event, much of our instrumental fiddle music, and more so the farther back we look, was obviously designed originally for the pipes. In Ireland, which was the most important source of this music, the Irish harp and tabor, (a one headed drum) were the other popular country dance instruments of the time.

The fiddle became widespread and popular. By the 18th and especially 19th centuries, some people in Scotland and England began to travel into back country areas and study this native folk music. Such collections as Playford's Country Dance Master, and the Scotch Musical Museum Volumes, preserve their findings in our libraries. Of course, by that time the music had already spread to America from Nova Scotia to California. Before talking about that however, brief mention should be made of the rest of Europe.

Whenever and however it happened, there is much similarity in parts of folk music of different European nations. Themes and stories found in our own country songs can be traced into eastern Europe and even Asia. The tune of "Soldiers' Joy" for example, is found as a Norwegian folk dance tune. Also, the fiddle spread among folk musicians on the continent. France has influenced our fiddle music in several ways. The square dance is a modification of the French quadrille. Uncle Jimmy Thompson, the first fiddler on the Grand Ole Opry, used to refer to some of his numbers as quadrilles, for example.

Many French settled in Canada where their influence on local country music has remained strong. In 1755 a large group of French settlers were driven out of Nova Scotia and settled in Louisiana. They gave rise to our Acadian or Cajun music which has strongly influenced present country music through its incorporation in the mixed and creative Texas styles. Bluegrass owes its heavier bowing and softer sound (relative to the British derived mountain sounds) partially to this influence.

Being the major or sole instrument of the common people, the fiddle was introduced early and everywhere with the colonists. Some of the old tunes were forgotten, others were remembered. Many of these had their names and associations changed. "Edinburgh Reel" became "Louisville Reel" or "Winnepeg Reel." "Farewell to Tarwarty" became "Rye Whiskey", etc. Still other songs were newly written, for example the "Eighth of January" commemorating the victory in the battle of New Orleans (also title of song to same tune) on January 8, 1815.

The Bluegrass Bookshelf, which publishes the bulletin for the American Bluegrass Society, although it prints only a small number of extra copies of the Bulletin, will be happy to send "sample copies" to prospective members if they, themselves, write us and ask for them. You cannot send in their names and addresses, they must do it for themselves. Tell your Bluegrass Buddies of this and ask them to send in a request for a sample copy and an application for membership, in A.B.S. Our membership is continuing to grow rather steadily - thought you would like to know that - BUT YOU CAN HELP IT ALONG A LOT BY PUBLICIZING IT.

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF HAS ACQUIRED A SUPPLY OF A NEWLY MARKETING BANJO STRINGS WHICH SELLS FOR AS LITTLE AS \$1.05 PER SET. IT WOULD BE WORTH YOUR WHILE TO ORDER A SET OR THREE AT THIS LOW PRICE - ALMOST AS INEXPENSIVE AS MAKING YOUR OWN.

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF IS NOW HANDLING THE KEITH-SCRUGGS TUNING PEGS (TUNERS) and, as you probably know, these tuners take the place of the regular 2nd and 3rd string pegs so that you do not have to drill two extra holes on your headstock or peghead. For those who have ornately inlay on the peghead this means you can have "tuners" without ruining your headstock inlay beauty. THEY SELL FOR \$15.00 PER SET, but they are offered special to members of the A.B.S. (only) for 5 dollars under that figure at \$10.00 dollars. Also the geared 5th peg is also carried and is heartily recommended over the traditional and ubiquitous 5th peg which is a devil to tune properly. The geared 5th peg sells regularly for \$12 and we offer them at \$10.50 to A.B.S. members.

THE BLUEGRASS SCENE, By Norm Carlson (continued from page 4)

Other incidents about the fiddle can be found in our early history. A fiddle was taken on the historic Lewis and Clark Expedition. After noting an exchange of gifts with the Eneeshur Indians, William Clark recorded in his journal on October 26, 1805: "We had also a fire made for those people to sit around in the middle of our camp, and Peter Crusat played the violin, which pleased those natives exceedingly."

Another incident I read from a source I have since forgotten described a traveler coming to a clearing in the woods of (I think) Tennessee, in which a group of people had gathered and were dancing to the tune of "Forked Deer" played on a fiddle.

Social changes in the 19th century influenced the fiddle music. In the early years the play party was a common social event. Here the young could get acquainted with members of the opposite sex under strict parental control and observation. Tunes such as "Skip to My Loo" and "Sally Goodin" originated with the play parties. As the country became more populous and social customs changed, the barn dance arose. Here a great many more of our common old-time and bluegrass fiddle numbers were first composed and heard.

Even before the barn dances became common, the five string banjo spread through the mountain regions. This started about 1850. Ultimately this led to the string band of which bluegrass is one manifestation.

In the early decades of this century one fairly typical old-time fiddler, Ben Vandavur, taught his nephews to play the fiddle and other musical instruments. These nephews were Bill, Charlie and Birch Monroe. In 1927, when the group started in radio, Birch played fiddle as part of the trio. But in 1930 RCA wanted them to record as a duet, so no fiddle is present on Monroe Brothers recordings.

In 1931 Bill and Charlie split up. Bill formed the Blue Grass Boys and started to build a new style of music that was a projection of his own ideas and creativity. This first bluegrass band included a fiddle; all subsequent Bill Monroe bands have included a fiddle, and Bill still maintains the fiddle is the most important instrument in bluegrass. In 1939 Bill and the Blue Grass Boys joined the Grand Ole Opry. The first song they sang was "Mule Skinner Blues".

(continued on page 6)

THE BLUEGRASS SCENE, By Norm Carlson (continued from Page 5)

In 1940 and 41 they recorded 16 sides for RCA Bluebird. Again the first one was "Mule Skinner Blues".

In those early years, as now, there was a lot of turnover in Bill's band. It is hard to tell who played fiddle in his band and when. Apparently Art Wooten was responsible for much of the spectacular work on the Bluebird sessions. This includes the rather unique and unbluegrass-like use of multiple notes that follow more like another vocalist than an instrument. This is heard on both "Mule Skinner Blues" and the famous "6 White Horses" originally released on the same disc. "I Wonder if You Feel the Way I do" and "No Letter in the Mail", both from the 1940 session, are slow, smooth and old-timey-sentimental. "Katy Hill" and "Dog House Blues" on the other hand are breathtakingly rapid. "D H Blues" could easily be taken for a contemporary bluegrass number despite the lack of banjo.

One source credits Birch Monroe with the fiddle work on the 1941 session. "In the Pines" could be him, but "Orange Blossom Special" and "Back Up and Push" are too hot to be his work. Another early fiddler with Monroe was Howdy Forrester, and there were probably many others.

Chubby Wise is the real foundation of bluegrass fiddle. He was with the group in 1945 and after, at the same time Flatt and Scruggs were members. This is the band on which all bluegrass is ultimately modeled, and it is Wise's smooth fiddling style that is THE bluegrass fiddling style. Apparently Benny Martin was fiddler in the band during the later part of the time Flatt and Scruggs were in it. He seems to have left with Flatt and Scruggs. At any rate, he was one of the first leaders of the Foggy Mountain Boys, a charter member, as he says. Many of Flatt and Scruggs' recordings from 1948 and 1949 however, employed Benny Sims on fiddle. The fact that these were made in different cities suggests he was a regular member of the band and traveled with the group.

Possibly the best bluegrass fiddler yet is Richard Greene, presently with Bill Monroe's band. At the age of 22 he still seems to be improving at a remarkable rate. Greene has been with Monroe somewhat over a year. This band has or soon will, record some of the material Monroe learned from his uncle Pen Vandever. This should make an interesting and paradoxical meeting of the first and most recent influences on bluegrass fiddle at its source.

Some records I recommend for study of fiddle history:

- Anthology of American Folk Music, Folkways FA 2951-2953
- Old Time Fiddle Tunes, Johnny Carignan, Folkways FG 3531
- Father of Bluegrass Music, Bill Monroe, RCA Camden CAL 71
- Country Music, Flatt & Scruggs, Mercury MG 20358 or
- Flatt and Scruggs, Flatt & Scruggs, Mercury MG 20542 or
- Original Sound, Flatt and Scruggs, Mercury MG 20773
- Original Bluegrass Sound, Bill Monroe, Harmony HL 7338
- Blue Grass Instrumentals, Bill Monroe, Decca 4601
- and Ole Opry Past & Present, Uncle Jimmy Thompson, Hilltop JN 6022
- Fantastic Fiddlin' & Tall Tales, Jerry Rivers, Starday 201
- Learn to Fiddle Country Style, Tracy Schwartz, Folkways FI 1350

There are many more. I don't claim these are the best, but they present some balance between general history and bluegrass history. I must admit I have only recently heard of the Schwartz album and have not yet obtained a copy, but I would expect it to have much good information.

I wish to acknowledge the help of Phil Shelton, a former classmate who taught me most of what I know of the early history of the fiddle. I especially acknowledge the information found in the script of his February 13, 1966 program on WMAA.

Until next time, NORM CARLSON

IF YOU MOVE, CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS FOR A TEMPORARY PERIOD OR RECEIVE YOUR MAIL AT A DIFFERENT ADDRESS THAN THE ADDRESS YOU PROVIDED US INITIALLY, PLEASE SEND US YOUR NEW ADDRESS AND PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE. ZIP CODES DO SPEED UP THE MAIL, AND THE POST OFFICE NOW REQUIRES US TO PLACE ZIP CODES ON ALL MAIL. This entails a lot of zip codes so please help us by putting your zip code on all your mail.

EAST TEXAS "HOOT"

A growing interest in Folk and Bluegrass music is in progress in East Texas in the small town of Colmesneil, located near Lufkin. Mr. Gibbs sponsors a real country "hoot" every two weeks. This is a true playing session - it is open to the public without charge, and is also open to all musicians. This session is conducted in a professional manner, with the musicians presenting a program to Mr. Gibbs as they enter. The only rules and regulations are that no alcoholic beverages are allowed. I attended this session last Saturday night, which was February 11, 1967. I play with a Bluegrass Group called the "FOLK AND FOLIC FELLOWS", consisting of myself on Dobro, Bobby Carroll on Twelve String Guitar, and Ben Morris on Five String Banjo.

The show was opened by ourselves and six numbers were played; "Foggy Mountain Top" and "Maple on the Hill" just to mention a couple. Several groups followed ours - some performing in the traditional Folk or Bluegrass manner, and some more along Country and Western themes. A very good time was had by all - there was a crowd of about 180 - though the weather was bad that night, and it hailed and sleeted during the performance. We had an opportunity to perform again later in the show, and by request departed somewhat from the true Bluegrass to perform a couple of Johnny Cash type numbers. These were well received.

It is sincerely hoped that this music show will continue. Mr. Gibbs has already started construction of a new building which will double the seating capacity (about 300 right now). I am happy to report that this show is going on and will continue with a lot of support. I will send in other reports as time goes on and as interest demands.

Submitted by: JIM McCOY (#014)
Beaumont, Texas

PLEASE, ON YOUR ORDERS FOR SUPPLIES FROM THE BOOKSHELF, INCLUDE YOUR SOCIETY NUMBER - It saves us a lot of time. You see, we do check back to see if you are of the current membership. Those who order supplies at the special rate given to members and are not members DO NOT RECEIVE THE DISCOUNT and the order is returned for additional amounts. When specials are announced in the Bulletin they are for SOCIETY MEMBERS ONLY. And we will continue to enforce that no one receives these specials unless they are current members of the Society. If you have allowed your membership to expire or it is coming up, it is best for you to "RE-UP". Still \$3.00 per year subscription/membership fee.

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Bluegrass Bulletin

Volume II APRIL 1967 No. 5

EDITORIAL

You have all heard tales of the Indian FAKIR. This man, originally was a poor man - a begger of a holy sect who often claimed to have the ability to perform miracles. Most of you recall seeing a photo or drawing of such a FAKIR lying or sitting on a bed of nails, presumably feeling no pain or discomfort. At any rate, this is the mental picture I have of an Indian FAKIR whenever I hear a reference to one.

Many of us have come to refer to him erroneously as a FAKER. A FAKER is one who FAKES. To FAKE usually means that something has the appearance of being something that it is not. Applied to a person performing ----- it usually implies that he is performing certain acts because he appears to be going through all the motions, but in fact he is not really doing so - he is FAKING. Therefore, we think of the Indian Fakir as the same as our run of the mill FAKER.

Well, regardless of whether the two words mean the same thing or not, we all know what it means to FAKE. Football players FAKE that they are going to pass, punt, or run in a certain manner or direction, and ultimately do something else - something altogether different. They give the stadium spectators the impression, but more important still, the defending team, that they are doing something or are about to do something that they will not do. This throws everyone "off balance" and provides the offensive player with an "edge" on his opponet. Wrestling has now come into general disrepute because most (if not all) wrestlers on the professional scene do a lot of FAKING. In fact, most people have lost interest in wrestling because the whole thing, they believe, is FAKE - that is - NOT REAL or UNREAL.

What has all this got to do with Bluegrass? Everything that's what? Banjo players in the fast three finger style of picking often FAKE their way through a melody. They do it so well that I sometimes wonder if it wouldn't be easier for them to learn the proper licks to play the real melody than to learn how to fake their way through a number. Much higher register work is FAKED by many, many Bluegrass Banjoists. A common expression among the performers is "If you don't know it FAKE IT." And they do!

O.K. so they fake it you say. If it sounds good what is there to complain about? Nothing and everything, that's what! If you don't mind being bluffed, then it doesn't matter I suppose, but if you don't like to be bluffed and you hate to hear people give the impression that they know something that they do not, then in that case, it matters a whole lot.

One of the very big and very real reasons why so much faking occurs in the Bluegrass Band is that the demand for the absolute fastest foll of the fingers and the absolute fastest flurry of notes be performed - what for? - to AMAZE. The performer gets sucked into this bit - and he prostitutes his music by failing to do right by the instrument and the Bluegrass Idiom of Music generally also fails. And, when Bluegrass fails, I, for one, don't like the smell of it.

(continued - next page)

Editorial - continued.

Fast, fast, fast, faster, faster, faster as if the whole band or the dog house bass were going to turn into butter fairly soon at the pace.

Speed in Bluegrass is becoming a bit too exaggerated. There is no argument that Bluegrass breakdowns are fast and they should be - that's the name of the game. But, really, some of this junk that I hear nowadays is so fast that it is not music any longer, just a race - a fast furious race to see who can bend a string or my eardrum the worst. It is frantic (like too many of those nutty top 40 or top 900 DJs around today - everything fast paced, echochambers, cataclysmic gongs, and the whole bit). Should the bluegrass banjoist lose his head and climb that deadly ladder at the expense of his music? Well, whatever, if he gets to the point where FAKING is necessary to do the bit, then, whether he be a musician or a musical gymnast, I doubt the desirability of it. (not to mention the intelligence of it). I believe we have far too many banjo gymnasts and not enough people, just plain people, who will play the banjo like it was a part of the band and intended to make real music and back up real singers.

My purpose in this editorial is not to knock the fast banjo. I do contend that too much emphasis is placed on speed to the expense of a good piece of bluegrass music, but that is not the whole of it. I am much more interested in what this emphasis is doing to (1) the banjoist himself (professional performer) (2) to the image of the Banjo as an instrument (3) to the novice or would-be banjo player - that is, the STUDENT (4) to the public, who, after all, have to listen to our music and who, in turn will determine whether we remain in the public eye or not. And we need to remain in the public eye if we are going to spread the Bluegrass Gospel.

Many people who are not already Bluegrass fans; those who will just happen onto a tune on their radio or TV by chance; these people make decisions on Bluegrass generally and the Banjo in particular, by what they hear initially. (Remember the bit about "first impressions are what counts")/ If he has the advantage of hearing one of the more talented men who can hold forth with excessive speed and still do a creditable job with the melody, he might be impressed. But, (and this is more probable) he will hear someone who is good, but not too good and one who has been impressed with the fact that the speed is the thing, the listener (and prospective fan) will not be favorably impressed. These chance listeners and those also who already think they don't care for Bluegrass have come to equate Bluegrass generally with the sound of the Banjo. And the "SOUND" of a Banjo is just about all they are getting. They know what it sounds like to tickle a few strings on a piece of calves hide or a piece of plastic - the sound of what they think is a banjo - to them that is IT. Some people have referred to the Banjo sound as the sound of "tin cans" being struck with any number of items. And to this I respond that they have not heard a banjo played, they have heard the Banjo being played with - and there is a difference. The sound of a banjo can be good or bad according to how good the banjo is and how well it is handled and how well it is adjusted, tuned, etc. (especially a Bluegrass Banjo) to people by giving them a 3 minute listen to a nut trying to run the 100 yard dash musically, on the head of a banjo.

(continued - next page)

Banjo music is fast, generally, and traditionally, but it is not ALWAYS played fast, and it is not always its best played breakdown style. But....But, alas when it is played fast, I think we have a responsibility to play it right, play the notes, play the proper speed (neither too slow or too fast) and work together with the other instruments of the band.

As members of the A.B.S. and as musicians (many banjoists) we have it in our hands as to what people will think of Bluegrass. What kind of image do we have and what do we want, FAKER or MUSICIAN?

UNION GROVE 1967

By
Chuck Hilton

It seems that everything annual becomes "bigger and better than ever," and so it was with this year's Union Grove Old Time Fiddlers' Convention, held March 24 -25. More people (approximately 10,000), more groups (over 75) and more individual performers (over 300) than ever before.

The Union Grove Convention was founded way back in 1924, for the benefit of the Union Grove, North Carolina, school system. For 43 years, the musicians and the school have split the profits 50-50. Over the decades the Convention has added more than \$55,000 to the school system bank balance, and like amount has been distributed to the thousands of performers appearing at the Convention.

If you're thinking of participating in the Convention to get in on some of the easy money -- don't. Once the kitty is divided up between all those appearing on stage, the amount per player usually runs between three and four dollars -- enough to buy a couple of sets of strings for the \$400 banjo or guitar being played.

For the information of those ABS members who don't live in an area sufficiently progressive and enlightened to promote a Fiddlers' Convention, here's how the Union Grove program works. The Union Grove populace of 2,000 points toward the Convention throughout the year. On Wednesday and Thursday preceding Convention weekend people begin trickling in from the points of the compass, the trickle becoming a torrent on Friday. Most folks either come for the day, bring camping gear, or sleep in their cars since Union Grove is in the middle of nowhere, being twenty miles or more from the booming metropolises of Statesville, Yadkinville, North Wilkesboro, Elkin and Mocksville.

This year the Friday night show, a mere preliminary to the Saturday happenings, featured past winners, miscellaneous groups, a square dance demonstration, and the auditions of new bands. Auditioning continued on Saturday morning and afternoon, interrupted by a parade and sky diving exhibition. The Saturday afternoon performance from 1:20-5 was yet another preliminary to Saturday night's advertised WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OLD TIME FIDDLERS' CONVENTION.

The Saturday night performance is what everyone has been waiting for. The crowds at Union Grove have become so large that no one building in town can accommodate them. So three adjoining facilities are used -- the school auditorium, the school gym, and a huge circus tent.

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If you want to sit in the comfort of the auditorium, you pay \$3.00. If the gym or the tent will suit you, \$2.00 gets you in. The bands rotate from one spot to another, playing one song in each of the three locations, so no matter where you are you see roughly the same show. The show this year began at 7:00 and ran, as the program promised, "UNTIL."

Bands compete in two classes. The Modern class comprises bands having electrical instruments or drums or non-stringed instruments. If a band plays "Cripple Creek" featuring a saxophone solo, it's Modern by definition. Last year's Grand Champions in the Modern division included a fiddle, Gibson Mastertone, D-18, D-28, Artist Model mandolin, and an electric guitar, which shifted the group to Modern. The auditions keep the Modern class free of rock & roll bands. Nevertheless, most of the Modern music is quite bad, being very poor Nashville type country swing or out-of-time hillbilly crooning and guitar torture with the amp knobs turned all the way up.

The other band class is the Old Time class by name, but the Bluegrass in actuality. The bands in this class will range from three performers up to seven or eight, depending on the number of guitars used (and banjos or diddles used, since a few groups feature double banjo or fiddle).

There are three judges in auditorium, gymnasium, and tent. After the competition is over, these nine judges get together and compare ratings to determine winners. Here is the rather weird point system suggested for judging bands:

Proper tuning of instruments	30
Timing	10
Band Balance	20
Originality.....	10
Quality of Music Played.....	20
Audience Appreciation	10
	<u>100 points</u>

To me it is peculiar to give a group 30 points for being in tune, and only 20 points for "quality of music played," whatever that may mean.

During the competition, the bluegrass groups aim for one or more of four trophies -- Old Time Band, fiddle, banjo and guitar. You can usually tell from the way they present themselves what they are going for. That is, if a fiddler is dressed differently from his fellows, plays "Orange Blossom Special," and never leaves the main mike, his band is giving him a shot at the fiddle trophy, one of the primary prizes despite the traditional name of the Convention. If the group plays and sings "Molly and Tenbrooks," with fiddle, banjo, and guitar each taking a break, they're probably going for the Old Time Band trophy, with the possibility that one of the individuals might pick up a trophy or ribbon for his work. And of course if a lone performer comes out, as a Florida boy did, and rattles off "Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms" as a guitar solo, he's obviously after the guitar prize. But everybody's here playing for fun and enjoyment; the losers don't have hurt feelings.

Who won? I didn't stay til 1 or 2 A.M. to find out. I can tell you who won last year, even though you've probably never heard of them. The Union Grove folks are perhaps presumptuous in the titles they present along with the trophies, but here are last year's

(continued - next page)

winners (individual winners):

World Champion Guitar Player: Jodey Starcher
World Champion Banjo Player: L. W. Lambert
World Champion Fiddler: Clark Kessinger

If you know more than one, you can consider yourself an aficionado plus.

The range of type and talent was enormous. The only big and middle-sized names I saw were Roger Sprung (Mr. Progressive Bluegrass), Mike Seeger (just taping), George Pegram (for you frailing fans), Winnie Winston (of the New York Ramblers), and Larry Richardson. (Apparently all I recognize are Banjo players.) Chick Martin, a grand old fellow who has played his banjo at nearly 200 of these affairs throughout the South, was also there.

The Great Society seems to have arrived among the bluegrassers - 2/3 to 3/4 of the guitarists had big Martins and knew how to handle them. Most of the mandolins were Artist Models and those that weren't were Gibson "A" Styles, many years old.

Impressive though the guitars and mandolins and their players were, it was the banjo contingent that had to be seen and heard to be believed. There were a number of bow-tie Mastertones and Scruggs Vegas, a couple of long-neck Vegas, and one RB-800 (the glare would blind you), but the majority of players sported prewar Mastertones. There must have been thirty or forty of them within one acre. Roger Sprung had his old gold-plated flathead, Winnie Winston carried the gold-plated Granada model, and so it went.

The banjo players were up to the quality of the instruments, too. Without presenting specifics, let's just say that no psychiatrist knows what an inferiority complex is until he's worked with a banjo for ten years, then goes to Union Grove only to hear kids twelve years old and under clicking off "Dear Old Dixie" and "Dixie Breakdown" in excess of the speed of sound. One band consisted of three kids playing mandolin (Artist Model -- even the kids are prosperous), banjo (Mastertone--ditto), and guitar (Gibson J-50 - ditto). You won't believe me, but each little lad was approximately as tall as the instrument he played. So let's not have any more excuses about "I can't play that because my hands aren't big enough." Those kids could play it.

And, depressing though the above news may be, the teenagers were of course better than the infants. It all makes for a difficult decision: should I practise harder -- or quit?

Most fun, as at any get-together like this, was the unorganized part, the wandering around on the grounds to hear the groups practising, talking about instruments, observing and listening. As you know, once a year the torpid Florida town of Sebring becomes the focal point of the world's sports car set. A similar occurrence takes place at Union Grove, N.C., and as Sebring may become used to the peculiarities of the outside world as represented by the motley annual influx, so has Union Grove become tolerant of the tourists, city slickers, and nouvcau bluegrass fans from the northern schools, with their long hair (cranial and facial), Sonny-andCher-inspired clothes, and ever-present beer can, jug, or bottle of Mogen David.

(Continued - next page)

Late Saturday night and Sunday morning, back they all go on horses and Hondas, in Mustangs and on mules, back to the farm houses or brokerage houses, kerosene lamps and neon lights. Once home, perhaps they head up into the attic to haul down that Oahu Publishing Company guitar, sold by a fast-talking door-to-door rural salesman twenty years ago. Or perhaps to the Fisher stereo, to play once again (hope springing eternal as it does) the lead guitar track on Doc Watson's miraculous "Black Mountain Rag" or the banjo track of Reno's "Follow the Leader." If it's on their fingerboards, it's got to be on yours.

And if you find it, go to Union Grove in 1968 and get yourself a trophy.

Chuck Hilton

THE BLUEGRASS SCENE

By

Norm Carlson

A HISTORY OF THE BANJO: SECOND OLDEST BLUEGRASS INSTRUMENT. Part I
(This is a two part article - part II will be in the next issue)

The Banjo, although not nearly as old as the fiddle, is old enough to reach beyond the memory of any mountain player and as far as I have been able to learn, its origin and introduction into mountain music precedes any oral traditions. I have never heard a reference to anyone's grandfather or other ancestor remembering when the banjo was a new device. For example, Mrs. Lucy Stanley (Ralph Stanley's mother), now over 80, never received the impression banjo's were new and never heard anything special about their origin. Yet, she and her brothers and sisters shared a banjo from their earliest childhood.

There seem to be two lines of origin of the banjo. Both begin in Africa. The date of different phases in the development can't be fixed and the whole argument is mostly hypothetical but in agreement with what evidence does exist. The banjo started as a drum. Some groups of West African tribes then added strings to achieve a snare drum affect. Possibly in some forms, the method of attachment of the strings required them to project some on each edge and the creative Africans discovered a new sound by plucking them. In any event they did develop the idea of extending the strings out specially on a neck and plucking them.

The knowledge of how to make this kind of banjo was brought to America within the first hundred years of the slave trade. Robert Black's notes on Washington record VM-743 give a good brief history of the development of the banjo between 1750 and 1850. He quotes a British traveler who observed banjos made from gourds with skins stretched over the opening, in the possession of Maryland slaves around 1774.

"They generally meet together and amuse themselves with dancing to the banjo. This instrument...is made of a gourd, something in the imitation of a guitar, with only four strings and played with the fingers....."

The following quote is also given from Thomas Jefferson's 1781 Notes On Virginia . "The instrument proper to them is the Banjar
(continued - next page)

Norm Carlson - The History of the Banjo - Part I (continued)

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which they brought higher from Africa..."

Although I have called these two lines of development, from a drum and from a gourd guitar, these may really be two phases of the same development. African drums were in many cases made from gourds and the gourd banjos were likely an evolved stage in which the resemblance to a drum had been lost.

Black gives an approximate date of 1830 for the beginning of the minstrel shows. These used a long necked four string fretless banjo. These shows were extremely influential in the rural South if we are to judge by the repertoire of virtually every early recorded banjo player. These plus the constant contact between members of the two races (especially after the Civil War on jobs, such as railroad building and operation) introduced the banjo to country music.

Black credits the invention of the 5th string to Joel Walker Sweeney around 1840. Other sources give credit to the same or other men with a date of 1848. Still others credit variously a white or Negro in Virginia in 1863-65. The earlier dates are much more likely.

Possibly a little later, frets and the fingerboard were added. Folk musicians now had an entirely new instrument with broad possibilities to work with. Many revolutionary playing styles, differing drastically from isolated area to isolated area, were worked out.

Like the fiddle hundreds of years earlier (and even now to some extent), the banjo was often looked upon as an instrument of the devil, associated with the evils of fun and dancing. Nevertheless, by the 1850's or 1860's the 5 String Banjo was widely known and used by the rural whites. It was used with the fiddle at dances, (which with population growth and higher standards of living were becoming larger and more frequent) and just for listening. This was the beginning of the development of the string band.

The banjo can readily be tuned into the 5 note nodal scale which was used before our modern 8 note or octaval scale. The ancient folk balads brought from England, Scotland, and Ireland, plus native American ballads in the same pattern had been sung unaccompanied in this modal scale. Now an instrument was available that suited these well as accompaniment. Thus the banjo started both the trend toward the country and bluegrass band and the concept of singing with instrumental accompaniment.

The use of the banjo seems to have been universal in the South by the late 1800's. A few bits of evidence indicate it reached toward the Canadian border also. W. H. Gifford, a Holstein breeder in Syracuse, New York named a bull born in 1879 "Banjo". An interview with an octagenarian fiddler-guitar player from my home area in Westernmost New York revealed that at least from the beginning of this century banjos were used at country dances. However, he remembered 6 string banjos were more common than five..

The 3 finger playing style is more important than all other aspects of bluegrass combined. It is one of America's most original and probably most long lasting contributions to music. Its popularity accepted origin with Earl Scruggs and discovery by Bill Monroe in 1945 is a monumental oversimplification. We shall look into that in the next issue.

NORM CARLSON

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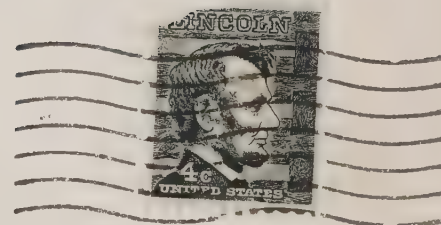
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The Bluegrass Bulletin

VOLUME # 2

MAY 1967

NO. VI

- EDITORIAL -

I want to discuss something in this issue which should be of interest to any person who even pretends to be interested in Bluegrass. That subject is THE SOUND OF BLUEGRASS IS USED. By "used" I certainly do not mean "played" or "presented" or "enjoyed". When I say used I mean used. Used to an end which is not to promote bluegrass, but used by Disk Jockies all over America as a "background" for selling everything from used cars to plum pudding or fried chicken. It is "used" by DJs to open a program of country music - used at the conclusion of the program - used for everything but to present the sound as what it is - BLUEGRASS MUSIC performed by Bluegrass Performers. And, although we are pleased to hear it used in any connection, I am literally appalled that it is used, but never actually presented. Open the program with a theme song which is strict bluegrass and then fill the program with the modern nashville junk. Except for the few instances where a particular song is at the time on the top 10 or so, you just don't hear Bluegrass on the radio - even the stations which term themselves "all country". Yes, they are all country but the opening and closing, background for commercial messages - these are unheralded BLUEGRASS.

I am not trying to force all the modern Nashville songs out and have 100% Bluegrass Programs (although I wouldn't mind that), but if Bluegrass is good enough to be used for a theme song and if it is good enough to sell fried chicken, it ought to be good enough to be presented as a Bluegrass Song and a bit of DJ chatter about the star or group performing it - and like that.

I am sure that in some dark remote region of the country or on one man's radio show somewhere Bluegrass is talked up, presented as a special type of country music, but where this is I cannot say because I have never heard very much of it - and I have traveled around the country quite a bit.

If you are a DJ reading this, why not take stock of how you used Bluegrass last week and how often you presented it in the body of a program. It will sell itself as well as fried chicken if you will give it a whirl on the turntable.

If you are "just a fan" why not write to your local country station or your local station which has a country show and ask them to play more of it in the body of the program and continue to "use" it for the theme song and commercial background. It is good music and the public needs to hear as much of it as they do to hear what Buck Owens, Bill Anderson, Dave Dudley or any of the rest of the Nashville group. If Bluegrass is Country then include it in the program.

PETE RICHARDSON

On The Scene with Norm Carlson, reporter "par excellence"

In addition to my "History of the Banjo" part two, which appears in this issue of the Bluegrass Bulletin, I submit this report which is in line with the "reporting" type material that I usually write and which I will write more of during the year.

Spring has arrived in Indiana! There have been enough warm sunny days to make me expect that Bill and Birch Monroe will soon decide to open the Brown County Jamboree in Beanblossom. This tiny plywood and shingle shack always features the finest bluegrass entertainment and this spring a big Bluegrass Festival has been talked about.

The Long winter at Purdue University could have been hard on this bluegrass fan. Some students and most of the local populace seem to fancy themselves "cultured" and "above" bluegrass. Thankfully I never have to encounter the fraternity "rock" segment, which also exists. As president of the Folk-song Club on Campus, I found that this year's population of undergraduates think folkmusic is Peter, Paul and Mary, and the Kingston Trio only. Some had heard or heard of bluegrass, but knew little about it. (continued page 2)

"On The Scene" By Norm Carlson - Continued from page 1

The club limps along with five or six members at the meetings and little if any dues. One energetic undergraduate girl saved the day for me by assuming the job of vice presidency and doing a lot of the work. Last year I had been the enthusiastic one. I brought the Stanley Brothers in and did most of the work. This year our vice president, a fine girl with a good business head and more knowledge of the commercial folk music, collected enough groups to hold a hootenanny. Unfortunately, the only bluegrass on the show was one banjo picker and his back up guitar man. They did a very poor job.

Luckily I found something locally more to my tastes than the polished and gutless "folk" music of the undergraduates and the modern country with drums, so dear to our vice president. Last year and again this year, a banjo picker with good bluegrass and old time styles appeared at quite a few meetings. His authentic aged-looking banjo, his scruffy clothes, and especially his mustache sitting straddle of a short "tar paper" cigar made him an instantaneous hit with all the freshman girls. I soon got acquainted with this fellow, Dennis Ricker, and his guitar picking friend, Clay Paul, from Georgia complete with accent. They are my trusty transport to Beanblossom.

Many weekends throughout the winter they get together at Dennis' home for a picking session to which I am invited despite my total lack of instrumental knowledge. As a collector I can sometimes bring some rare records or tapes to awe them; plus I can serve as their "expert" on the names and words of songs. The more they drink the more of an expert I become. (

Dennis has a Vega banjo about 40 years old without a resonator. It has an appealing sound for frailing and its volume is remarkable. In fact Dennis keeps some "stuffing" in the back or it would be too loud. He does well on both frailing and 3 finger but doesn't know too many songs.

Clay isn't as instrumentally proficient but he does a good back up job with the guitar. He sings with a high, plaintive, intense Georgia sound but no volume.

The Folksong Club treasurer, Pete Rollet, often attends these sessions to sing and play the guitar. His repertoire is strongest in blues.

Floor space in the Ricker apartment is also occupied by a guitar, a mandolin, and autoharp, and a fiddle. Dennis can really show off with the guitar and he knows a few tunes on the mandolin. He plays the fiddle least of all, but to my mind this is when the music really reaches full proportions.

Occasionally we are able to unearth some local talent. One of our discoveries is banjo picker Hank Hankins. Hank used to play with a group called the Stony Mountain Boys in Ohio, but now he lives in Lafayette. He has a specially made Vega banjo, inlaid and hand decorated to look like it belonged to a maharaja, as my friends describe it. The sound quality is at least as good as the appearance. Hank is an artist in every sense of the word. A lot of his material is taken from Don Reno and his performance is almost hypnotic. His left hand works every spot on every string with obvious skill and love.

Hank, in turn, learned banjo mainly from Samuel Cox, a barber in Portsmouth, Ohio. Hank seems to have no doubt that Cox is the best banjo player in the world. An old man now, he can do anything any other banjo player in the country can do plus a lot they have never thought of, according to Hank.

(EDITORS NOTE: We get lots of letters at the Bookshelf describing about one thousand and one fellows that can do these things with Banjos - they are all reported to be better by far than Earl Scruggs and Don Reno put together.) Cox once lead the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra with five string banjo.

Continued on next page-

On the Scene with Norm Carlson (continued)

Anyway, Hank taught Larry McNealy, a youngster who also lives here in Lafayette. Larry won the banjo contest last year at Beanblossom and later appeared on the Grand Ole Opry. I've heard he also won at least one other major banjo contest. He appears on the Sunnysiders' REM record "Sometime Late at Night" b/w "On The Rock". None of us at the University have met him yet.

One weekend local fiddler Kenny Smith participated in the party. Unfortunately I missed that time, but I understand it was a lively session. There used to be a weekly square dance in a small town north of here and Kenny might be the one who used to play for that. A few fellows from campus also used to be regulars there where they formed a complete bluegrass band. I never managed to get out there before it terminated.

Most parts of the country probably have at least some bluegrass or old time music activity if you look in the right place. A little talk with the janitor here uncovers the fact that a great many people out in the country own and play, even make, instruments. You always turn up "the best banjo player in the world" or similar phenomenon, that someone knew or heard of. At least in our case we may be able to record and talk to the "best" thanks to the fact both Dennis and Clay play. We plan a day in Portsmouth this spring for this purpose.

I hope this article has not been boringly personal. As I understand it the Bulletin was founded for members of the Society to exchange thoughts on their bluegrass experiences. - NORM CARLSON (EDITORS NOTE: You do the job well).

The History of The Banjo (PART 2)

By Norman Carlson

In part one, which appeared in the April issue of the Bulletin, we presented the earliest phases in the development of the Banjo and came to the mention of our present day three finger playing technique which has distinguished the Banjo and made it known more fully. I mentioned that it is a monumental oversimplification to assume that Earl Scruggs was the first one to use the three finger roll and Bill Monroe's use of it as being the beginning of its use.

As is well known, every region, every player, developed a different banjo style before the days of the radio and phonograph. The notes to American Banjo Scruggs style say that 3 finger picking was done as far back as 1911. Certainly some of the North Carolina pickers that Scruggs, Stanley, and Reno learned from must have been around and picking near that time.

The most successful North Carolina banjo picker in the early recording days was Charlie Poole. He used not only the thumb and two fingers as in present 3 finger style, but also the little finger. His style was influenced in part by a hand injury. His picking was slow and far less prominent in the band than present bluegrass banjo. He had a solid string band sound but there was little hint of it being any closer to bluegrass than other bands of the time.

Fischer Hendley (with the Aristocratic Pigs) was another N. Carolina recording artist and banjo picker in the 20's and 30's. Doc Boggs also had a 3 finger style.

One of the greatest surprises of my life came when a collector (continued)

"The History of The Banjo" Continued from page 3.

sent me a tape of two cuts from a dub of a 78 of Wilmer Watts and the Lonely Eagles. These horribly scratchy almost inaudible cuts from around 1930 contained an incredibly close approximation to modern bluegrass. The 3 finger style banjo was almost as smooth and flowing as Scruggs style but most remarkably, it was the lead instrument. It carried the melody and interacted with the vocalist just as in a modern bluegrass group. The only other detectable instrument louder than the scratches was a guitar, also played remarkably like modern bluegrass. This group recorded on Paramount and very little seems to be known about them. They did have a modern bluegrass sound but without the fame, imagination, and persistence of Monroe, it was lost.

Recordings of Byron Parker and his Mountaineers from the late 30's and 40's can give a similar start to a careful listener. The group's banjo player, Snuffy Jenkins, occasionally can be heard in a short run that is clearly 3 finger bluegrass style. However, the banjo is often drowned behind the other instruments and never assumes any importance comparable to what it has in bluegrass bands. Jenkins, nevertheless, is the grandfather of bluegrass banjo picking. (EDITORS NOTE: See, in JUNE issue, the interview of SNUFFY JENKINS by ABS member L. T. Shannon.)

Jenkins started playing banjo in 1927. He learned from Rex Brooks, a North Carolina 3 finger picker, and Smith Hammett, whom I'll mention later. In 1937 Jenkins joined Byron Parker and the band, now called the Hird Hands, still exists.

Earl Scruggs was born in Cleveland County, North Carolina in 1924. He was fascinated by the banjo even at the age of 4 and began to develop his special style by the age of 10. He told me that his first public appearance was when he was 6 at which time he played with his brother for a school function or similar event. He said that he could not do any really playing at that time. He told me his brother, Junie, was as great an influence as anyone on his style. (Junie's playing as well as a number of other pre-Scruggs 3 finger pickers can be heard on FA 2314 American Banjo Scruggs Style) He also lists Smith Hammett, Fischer Hendley, and Snuffy Jenkins as very important. Jenkins recalls helping Scruggs quite a bit before Scruggs had really learned to play. Scruggs later watched Jenkins in radio studios when he had himself become a professional.

In 1945 Scruggs asked Bill Monroe for a job. From 1942 Bill had had a banjo picker in his band - Stringbean (Dave Akeman). No recordings were made with Stringbean so we can only speculate on the sound of the band. With the hiring of Scruggs, however, a sound with a long traditional background yet with hypnotizing revolutionary sparkle was placed under the nose of a man with the creativity to find its best application and the determination to control and present it.

A conversation between Bill Monroe and Mayne Smith reported in Bluegrass Unlimited reveals that when Scruggs entered the Blue Grass Boys he could do only two songs in 3 finger style - Cumberland Gap and Lonesome Road Blues. I have two unreleased recordings from Monroe's first Columbia session in 1945. There is banjo on one - "Come Back to Me in My Dreams". It is in the background - way back. It could be three finger. I have heard that "Bluegrass Breakdown" was cut on the first session. In any case, it is the first recording where Scruggs can be heard distinctly on a 3 finger break.

(continued on page 5)

May 1967

"The History of The Banjo" Part Two (continued from page 4)

Monroe's Columbia recordings (1945-c. 50) retain a strong mandolin lead. It is as if he had not yet realized the full potential of the banjo. Some of the last cuts of the band with Scruggs do contain very strong banjo leads, e.g. "Molly and Tenbrooks". The importance of the banjo seems to grow up to 1948 when Scruggs left with Flatt.

Monroe was probably more conservative on recordings than in live shows. Live recordings from the Opry around 1948 show the banjo was used extensively as in modern bluegrass. By this time the general public had the first surge of awareness that this was special. Their reactions were tremendous. The announcer made mention of Scruggs' "fancy banjo" almost every time.

Flatt and Scruggs had both been featured often in the roles they would have to take in an independent band. With this training they left in 1948 and formed the Foggy Mountain Boys. Now free of any Monroe restrictions on display of the banjo, they recorded "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" perhaps the most influential banjo song of all time. It told the world what bluegrass could be and it taught a new generation of revolutionary enthusiastic banjo players.

In the previously mentioned Smith - Monroe conversation, Monroe says that Scruggs and Don Reno learned their style at the same time by watching Snuffy Jenkins. Reno expands this himself in an interview with Peter Wernick in a later issue of the same publication. He states that he developed the style first and in 1945 was asked to join the Blue Grass Boys. He had to go into the service, however, so Scruggs got the job.

Scruggs style was definitely his own and not identical to that of Jenkins or any other previous picker. It combined rhythm and melody functions better than any of the previous 3 finger styles. Reno implies his original style was very nearly like that of Scruggs. When he joined Bill Monroe, immediately after Scruggs departure, he decided to develop a new different style, which mostly involved transferring guitar techniques to the neck of the banjo. I haven't seen a full Monroe discography, but I've heard that "Bluegrass Special" was an early item Reno cut with the Blue Grass Boys. It does have his sound.

Ralph Stanley learned claw-hammer banjo in childhood from his mother and used it on the Stanley Brothers' earliest recordings. Partly under the influence of Bill Monroe's performances on the Grand Ole Opry and very importantly through Peewee Lambert, the mandolinist in their first band and a fanatic Monroe fan, the Stanley Brothers moved closer to Monroe's bluegrass sound, including the 3 finger banjo. Mayne Smith has stated in an article in the Journal of American Folklore (later reprinted in Bluegrass Unlimited) that Ralph learned the 3 finger roll from Scruggs "while the brothers were living in Nashville." However, Ralph never lived in Nashville and he actually learned mainly from Snuffy Jenkins and partly from watching Scruggs when they both performed on the same radio station. Ralph has always maintained a great personal admiration for Scruggs' style and skill on the banjo.

Although nearly every major bluegrass banjo picker has made some contributions to the variety of techniques, none since Reno has been as important as Bill (Brad) Keith. Keith grew up in Boston and began playing bluegrass in clubs, coffee houses, and colleges around the area when he was a student at Amherst.

(continued on page 6)

The History of the Banjo - Part two - Continued.

Early in 1962 he began developing his own banjo style. It represents another step beyond previous styles in the combination and balance of melody and rhythm functions and is also characterized by frequent rapid moves up and down the neck. Keith's trademark has been the adaptation of fiddle tunes to his banjo style. In 1963 Keith joined the Bluegrass Boys. Later he played with a jug band in Chicago. (EDITORS NOTE: Keith has been quoted as saying that his style of banjo picking is best described as "fiddle picking".)

In 1951 Scruggs invented "Scruggs pegs" as an aid to rapid tuning between songs. Soon he discovered the pleasant sound of tuning within a song, achieving an affect that Reno and some others had approximated by displacing the string on the fret as it was plucked or touching the portion above the nut. In recent years Bill Keith and Dan Bump developed a peg ("Scruggs-Keith pegs") that looked like a regular peg but could tune a string like a Scruggs peg. In this way the two additional pegs (a total of 6 on the peghead) that operated cars for the 2nd and 3rd strings, the old Scruggs pegs can be eliminated. It would be a matter of choice which pegs to employ for any particular performer but also shape and inlay of the peghead make the original type difficult to employ.

I have mentioned a few of the more important events in the history of the banjo and its playing techniques. I'll conclude with a selected list of records that can increase understanding of the subject, either through their sound, the notes on the back, or both.

- Record List -

- Washington 743 Pickin' & Blowin', George Peagram & Walter Parham, early NC 3 finger picking style, notes good on early history.
- Folkways FA-2951-2953, American Folk Music, 6 records re-issue with many banjo pickers of 1927-32, good notes also.
- Folk Promotions 11557, 11568 Old-Time Songs and Tunes from Clay County, West Virginia, Jenes Cottrell and French Carpenter, Cottrell has very primitive style of banjo playing.
- Decca 4760, First star of Grand Ole Opry, Uncle Dave Macon, wide range of early style banjo, great skill, minstrel show influence.
- RBF RF 51, Uncle Dave Macon, more variety from greatest pre-scruggs picker.
- County 505, Charlie Poole & N. Carolina Ramblers, unusual banjo picking with old string band sound.
- County 509, Charlie Poole & N. C. Ramblers vol. 2
- Paramount 3210, Benn on the Job Too Long, Wilmer Watts & Lonely Eagles, 1930 bluegrass, unavailable, 78 rpm collectors' item.
- Folkways FA 2314, American Banjo Scruggs Style, S. 1 a number of pre-Scruggs 3 finger pickers, S. 2 post-Scruggs.
- Folk-Lyric 123, Carolina Bluegrass, Snuffy Jenkins & Hired Hands, some good, some poor, some original pre-Scruggs style, some modified, all recorded in 1962.
- Harmony HL 7290, Great Bill Monroe, especially "Bluegrass Breakdown."
- Harmony HL 7315, Best of Bill Monroe, especially "Bluegrass Special."
- Harmony HL 7338, Original Blue Grass Sound, Bill Monroe, especially "Molly & Tenbrooks."
- King 552, Instrumentals, Reno & Smiley, one of several fine Reno albums.
- Melodeon MLP 7322, Their Original Recordings, Stanley Brothers, Ralph before, during and after learning 3 finger.

(continued page 7)

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Record Listing in conjunction with "The History of The Banjo" continued from P.6

King 615, Stanley Brothers, some of best hard driving bluegrass.
Mercury MG 20358, Country Music, Flatt & Scruggs, especially instrumentals including "Foggy Mountain Breakdown".
Columbia CL 1019, Foggy Mountain Jamboree, Flatt & Scruggs, especially instrumentals, show first use of Scruggs pegs.
Prestige Folklore FL 14002, Bluegrass: Living On the Mountain, Bill Keith & Jim Rooney, recorded before Keith worked with Monroe.
Decca 31540, Devils Dream, Bill Monroe, Keith on banjo, 45 rpm.
Decca 31596, Salt Creek, Bill Monroe, Keith on banjo, 45 rpm.

EDITORIAL ADDITIONS:

Cameo-Parkway P/SP 7017 "Twelve Shades of Bluegrass" Featuring Bob Johnson and The Lonesome Travelers. Johnson's Bluegrass Banjo on this recording is the best I have heard - total band sound also the best I have heard.
MGM E/SE 4135 New Sound in Bluegrass - Bluegrass Banjo with Strings" Bill McElhiney and His Orchestra and featuring Bob Johnson on the Bluegrass Banjo." This is a superb recording of the blending of traditional bluegrass banjo with a full orchestra. Splendid.
Starday SLP 221 "Fire on the Strings" various bands and pickers - hear especially Cuts by Scruggs, Bill Clifton, Allen Shelton and the Stoneman family (Ronnie Stoneman a great female Bluegrass picker.)
World-Pacific WP-1812 "12 String Guitar" - The Folkswingers. The title is not important here. The Bluegrass Banjo picking of Douglas Dillard is superb.
Columbia CL 1664/ CB 3464 - "Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs", "Songs of the Famous Carter Family" Featuring Mother Maybelle. The Banjo picking here a bit slower on many selections - one can follow the roll easier and study the picking better than on most Scruggs albums.

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Bluegrass Bulletin

Volume No. 2

- JUNE 1967 -

No. 8

The EDITORIAL -



I have been thinking a great deal about the BULLETIN and the part it plays in the AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY together with the "goal" of the Society.

Since our publication appeared (even before the Society was formed) several or more sheets have come on the scene in whole or in part similar to our own format and purpose. However, as I have surveyed these papers, the recurring theme seems to be to promote one, two or a few particular groups or individuals. That is not our purpose and never will be. The only thing which needs mention in this connection is the relationship that the Bluegrass Bookshelf has with the Society and the Bulletin.

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF was the "mother" of the Society and was the "mother" of the BULLETIN. The Bookshelf still publishes the Bulletin, currently at a loss, since subscription fees/membership dues do not pay the entire cost of publication. Therefore, the Bulletin contains SPECIALS from the Bookshelf. But it should be noted that this was not and is not construed or should it be construed that the Bookshelf is "advertising" itself. The SPECIALS are items provided to members of the Society and to no one else, at lower than regular prices as a service to the membership and as an inducement to have others band with the Society for the over-all purpose.

However, to get on with the main purpose of the editorial this month, The Bulletin has never sought to point the finger at any one group and promote that group at the expense of others. Really, the prime editorial position of the Bulletin has been and will continue to be, to promote BLUEGRASS, PER SE, or THE MUSIC ITSELF. We also want to promote any and all Bluegrass Groups wherever they are and whoever they are. We particularly want to publicize the new and amateur groups who have no publicity. Whenever these groups are brought to our attention, we publish anything we can about them. It has been my personal opinion that the BIG groups (big in the sense of popularity) do not especially represent the music as they should. As a matter of fact, these larger groups who enjoy national and international popularity seem to be seeking to do a lot more for themselves as commercial groups than they do for the music. I want, therefore, to issue a big blanket invitation to any and all Bluegrass groups, to send their photographs and information as to where they play, where the boys in the group (or girls) are from and something of personal interest about the individuals in the group - send it all to the Bulletin. We would moreover, like to have some statements from the more popular individuals in the field as to what they feel about their music and how we all might help the Bluegrass music idiom generally and specifically. (The big groups receive the Bulletin or see it one way or the other, so failure on their part to submit such a statement for our reading and inspiration simply are not interested.) They have time to promote their records so they can write too!

(continued - page 2)

There is absolutely nothing exclusive about the American Bluegrass Society with reference to individuals or groups who play the music. We are exclusively Bluegrass and that only and entirely. We don't wave flags for people, we wave them for the music. We actually cannot support any particular group or individual and remain loyal to our goal of promoting Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music. The groups and the individuals are not anything without the music (although one would sometimes get that impression to hear them talk) and some of the more popular persons in Bluegrass need very much to take stock of this fact. In fact, I have been told more than a few times about instances when the "big names" were approached by a Society member for a statement or information to pass on to you - the Bluegrass fans, and have the "big star" almost push them aside, stick their nose in the air (proverbial) and rush off the scene. I find it hard to promote such people regardless of whether they sell records or not.

All of the name bands, however, are important to the spread of the Bluegrass sound, but of just as much importance, if not more, are the scores of individuals and groups who have never been heard of outside their own locality, who play in high school gyms, garages, homes and open air spots where groups of people gather to hear them all over America, Canada and in foreign countries. These people who play bluegrass, in my opinion, are the ones who will ultimately make our music known all over as it should be known. They play with zeal for the sake of playing and being heard and not for the almighty buck. I want to hear from any of these groups and about them. Let the Bulletin be their publicity sheet. It is theirs to use. Let the Bulletin have any information on any groups and let us give them some publicity so the people in their locality can find out where they can hear some GOOD BLUEGRASS MUSIC. Please go out of your way for a bit and let us have - send in - photographs and any information you have on all of the groups in your area and we will do our best to bring them to the attention of our reading public (which continues to grow) then, the more you promote the Society, the more scouts for groups we will have and ultimately the more people will hear about the wonders of Bluegrass. The most "natural" music in the world.

(The photo on page one is yours truly, as most of you wanted to see what was speaking to you each month.)

Pete Richardson
PETE RICHARDSON

VIEWS & REVIEWS @ DAVE TEETER

For anyone who is interested: There is a new country music magazine being printed now (not mimeographed). It is off the press now and contains lots of interesting articles and pictures. Included are articles on the Bluegrass Festival at Fincastle, Va., the late Roy Hall, Chief Powhatan, the Country Gentlemen, Bill Clifton, Jim & Jesse, the late Lonnie Irving, etc. This magazine sells for 25¢ plus a 4¢ stamp. If interested write: Country Music Gazette, P. O. Box 2058, Roanoke, Virginia 24009.

Member Tom Galbraith #109 sent me a good suggestion. He feels it would be a good idea if the society published in the Bulletin a list of all members and their addresses so that pickers in the same area could get together for sessions. Sounds fine, eh! To my knowledge the Bulletin must have written permission to publish names and addresses. (any comments, editor Richardson?) EDITORS NOTE: Yes, I will comment. We did previously print names in the bulletin for this purpose, but so many of them received all sorts of "can I sell you this?" junk that I have not encouraged the practice anymore, however, this is all up to the membership. If you want to have your name published you may request this in writing and I will oblige you.

(Dave's column continues on the next page)

VIEWS AND REVIEWS by DAVE TEETER (continued from Page 2)

open letter to JIM in Beaumont: I'm sorry for not writing back. I wasn't ignoring you; I've been so swamped with work, that even Pete thought I was dead. Generally speaking I've given up mandolin picking (i.e., until I find another good one to buy). So far this year I've had a 1929 Gibson F-2 and a 1937 Gibson A-1. Both were excellent, but I was a fool and sold them. If I get another one I'll be glad to help you.

open letter to DON in C.R. Iowa: Enjoyed your letter. No, I don't like drums in BG but its hard fighting the record companies.

I HAVE ANOTHER RECORD REVIEW FOR YOU THIS MONTH:

BEATLE COUNTRY - CHARLES RIVER VALLEY BOYS - ELEKTRA EKL-4006

Side 1: I've Just Seen a Face - Baby's in Black - I Feel Fine - Yellow Submarine - Ticket to Ride - And Your Bird Can Sing

Side 2: What Goes On - Norwegian Wood - Paperback Writer - She's a Woman - I Saw Her Standing There - Help!

RATING ***/****

(for an explanation of how the ratings are made and explanation of the number of stars or asterisks to indicate same, refer to earlier bulletins.)

I imagine the first thing I should say about this album is that if you're a die-hard purist you won't like this record. For those of you who are more tolerant, then give a listen. You're probably wondering just what the Charles River Valley Boys are trying to prove by recording Beatle Songs in the Bluegrass idiom -? It seems that that was exactly what they were trying to prove - that non-Bluegrass songs could be recorded successfully in the Bluegrass idiom! And this album is successful. Side 2 is somewhat better and closer to Bluegrass than Side 1. The personnel of this album are: Jim Field on guitar and vocals, Bob Siggins on the banjo and vocals, Joe Val on mandolin and vocals, Everett Lilly, on the Bass, and sit-ins Buddy Spicher, fiddle, Craig Winfield on Dobro and Eric Thompson on lead Guitar. Although the whole album is excellent, there are certain highspots I'd like to point out. Listen to or for the Dobro on "What Goes On"; the Bass in Norwegian Wood; all instruments and especially the Banjo in "She's a Woman;" the Fiddle in "Help". Nothing written about this album can actually do it justice; one must hear it to appreciate the achievement of this group. (NOTE: You may purchase this record through the Bluegrass Bookshelf)

This is the only record to be reviewed in this issue, and for two reasons. The first is that this album is the only new one I have had access to recently. To my knowledge no new releases in album form have been issued recently by any of the big boys in Bluegrass, thus no reviews. The second reason is that I can't afford to buy all the records which should be reviewed. There are many good Bluegrass groups recording which are recording on minor southern labels and they are excellent, but which I cannot afford to purchase. If any of you do have these records and want them reviewed - either send me the record or a momo tape of the record. Tapes would be preferred because of shipping ease. This would make things much easier on me for I'm not rich. I would, of course, send the tapes or records back to you after reviewing them. Please take this suggestion into consideration.

(DAVE TEETER'S COLUMN CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

Ralph Stanley has formed a new band now. The personnel are: Ralph Stanley, Banjo; Curley Cline, Fiddle; Larry Sparks, Guitar and lead singer; George Shuffler, Bass; and Melvin Goins, Guitar.

Bill Monroe has changed fiddle players. Byron Berline is his new Fiddler. Does anyone know what happened to Richard Greene?

What's with Jim and Jesse? Their new release features pedal steel and drums and all-electric instruments. Shall we protest? Of course, while we're protesting, we should protest the Osborne Brothers. Their release of "She's Not the Kind of Woman I wanted" also features electric instruments. It's disgusting the way electricity is ruining bluegrass. Why does a bluegrass group try to hit the Top 10? That's an impossibility anyhow!

See you all next month,

DAVE TEETER

"Woes of a Bluegrass Wife" by Irene Tyler

I suppose every wife has woes, but I maintain that a bluegrass wife has extra special ones which the ordinary wife escapes.

For example, I am surrounded by a collection of strictly bluegrass instruments. My husband parks one dobro on the sofa; another dobro at one end and a five string banjo behind the sofa. Now he plans to buy a mandolin. I wonder where we will put that! I will not be at all surprised if he buys a fiddle after he acquires the mandolin.

The collection of instruments does not end my woes. My husband has become such an enthusiast that he bought a tape recorder. That leads to the extra cost of tapes which he buys in quantity. Am I complaining about the cost? (Not exactly). I am bemoaning the loss of storage space. I had counted on having said storage for some household items. When I came to use the space, I found it had been confiscated for tapes.

In case I am beginning to sound like an old battle axe or a nagging wife, I invite you to read on and perhaps you may gain a different impression.

Thus far I have discussed the bluegrass instruments and tape recorder. The bluegrass recording artist will be happy to learn that we have a record collection in three cabinets. Each time my husband hears a music store, he returns with bluegrass records. We actually have one record cabinet that is sagging!

In addition we have various picks, steel bars, manuals and tapes on how to play the dobro, bluegrass banjo and the mandolin. We also subscribe to various bluegrass publications and country music magazines. At the time of this writing, he is joining a fan club (bluegrass- naturally!)

I guess that covers the collection which overflows into our home, but you haven't heard anything until you hear the sounds issuing forth.

Thus far I have survived while my husband practiced on the dobro. I now love the sweet sounds coming from it. I love the five string banjo, but what weird sounds come forth at the beginning stages. Even the beagle dog exits fast!

If you think our homelife is complicated by bluegrass music, let me tell you something of our traveling experiences. Four years ago we took a four day trip to Maryland. Keith went to visit Deacon Brumfield, and didn't appear until 2 A.M. Happily, he had called to tell us he was going to hear the group play over WWVA Wheeling. As you might guess, we visit anyone connected with the dobro or banjo on our travels. We have managed to visit the A.P. Carter home. Keith has visited Shot Jackson and Tut Taylor.

Finally I made a decision. If you can't lick 'em - join 'em. I tried to master the autoharp, but I don't seem to be a by ear musician. My husband tolerates my singing so we record for our own amusement and amazement. I have helped

(continued on page 5)

WOES OF A BLUEGRASS WIFE - By Ilene Tyler (wife of Keith Tyler).
(continued)

to copy the manuscript for my husband's manual "How To Play The Bluegrass Dobro By Ear" I enjoy being a bluegrass wife. I enjoy reading the bluegrass publications. We would like to hear from others who love bluegrass music. Let's have more letters in the Bluegrass Bulletin. Sincerest wishes for bluegrass picking.

ILENE TYLER

(EDITORS NOTE: O.K. wives does this article by Ilene strike a chord in you - do you have similar feelings about your husband's music?) PAR

IF ANY OF YOU HAPPEN TO BE IN THE VICINITY OF 5552 Sackville Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia you might enjoy visiting with Wayne Fader at THE PRIVATEER COFFEE HOUSE there.

The Bluegrass Scene by Norm Carlson

This month I want to correct a number of errors in my past columns. It is very important that these be noted especially since the Bulletin is being read by more and more people. In my February 1967 review of country music literature I seem to have submitted one page of preliminary rather than final draft. The "firm in Nashville" that published Linnell Gentry's A History and Encyclopedia of Country, Western, and Gospel Music is McQuiddy Press. It contains the LEAST, not the best, information on bluegrass of the three books mentioned. I have recent information that Malone's thesis is being rewritten and will be printed and made available to the public.

Since the February issue came out, Shelton and Goldblatt's The Country Music Story has become available from David Freeman in New York City for \$6.00. (DAVID FREEMAN - COUNTY RECORDS, 307-311 East 37th Street, N.Y. N.Y. 10016)

After the May 1967 issue of the Bulletin came out carrying my column of three finger banjo history I was immediately informed of some errors. Printed information about the early Monroe material can be found in Country News and Views 5:2) October, 1966 and one of the old series Disc Collectors #14. Both of these sources and Flatt and Scruggs discographies which include information on the two Columbia sessions in which Flatt and Scruggs recorded with Bill Monroe.

Surprisingly, Monroe's first Columbia session, February, 1945, did include Dave Akeman (Stringbean) on banjo with Tex Willis on guitar, Chubby Wise on fiddle and Mrs. Howard Forrester on accordion. David Freeman, lists the following as some of the songs recorded: True Life Blues, Goodbye Old Pal, Footprints In The Snow, the instrumental Bluegrass Special, and the unreleased numbers Come Back to Me in My Dreams, and Nobody Loves Me. Undoubtedly Rocky Road Blues was also included; Monroe has said Stringbean wrote the song and gave it to him.

Listening to these recordings and comparing Stringbean's later material causes one to wonder just what the relative rolls of Scruggs, Monroe, and Akeman were in the development of bluegrass banjo styles. I have no knowledge of any recordings by Akeman before 1945. However, I would be surprised if his current style was unsuitable for bluegrass and probably dictated the less obtrusive picking.

The September 16-17, 1945 and October 27-28, 1947 sessions included Flatt and Scruggs, Chubby Wise, and Cedric Rainwater on bass. Country News and Views lists the following numbers in the 1946 session: Heavy Traffic Ahead, Why Did You Wander? Blue Moon of Kentucky, Toy Heart, Summertime Is Past and Gone, Mansions For Me, Mother's Only Sleeping, Blue Yodel No. 4, Will You Be Loving Another Man?, How Will I explain About You? Shining Path, (continued page 6)

Wicked Path of Sin. It sounds like Monroe was trying to keep the banjo style much the same here as on the 1945 session. It could also be that Monroe was forced to record (by contract obligations) before the new group had worked together long or before Scruggs had learned many songs in 3 finger style.

Assuming about a one year delay between the recording session and the issueing of Blue Yodel No. 4, which one of the Scruggs private records identifies as Bill's "latest release," we observe a remarkable change in this time period. (Monroe can bring about a remarkable change in a band in one month as I have several times observed). Among the Columbia releases listed as from the 1947 session are: I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky, It's Mighty dark to Travel, and Blue Grass Breakdown. Strangely R. J. Ronald does not list Molly and Tenbrooks in his Country News and Views discography but he does mention it as being recorded in these sessions with Scruggs, elsewhere in his article, and he lists it on the Harmony reissue 7338. The four numbers I have mentioned best show the new prominence of the banjo. However, the private recordings from the Opry, which I have speculated are from the same period, feature the banjo far more spectacularly. It is especially interesting to compare the style of the 1946 numbers, which include the unreleased "Why Did you Wander?" - unfortunately I have not heard this master-, with the Opry version of this song. The Opry versions of this and other songs would not be out of place in 1957 or 1967.

The last Monroe Columbia session in October or November 1949 included Mac Wiseman on guitar, Rudy Lyle on banjo, Jack Thompson on Bass, and Chubby Wise on Fiddle. Don Reno never cut a recording with Monroe.

First and last session personnel information is from Neil Rosenbert.

The need for these corrections brings up a point about the unavailability of information on bluegrass history. A few collectors and scholars have laboriously compiled a small portion of the knowledge we ought to have. Often it has been printed in publications that are accessible by collectors standards, yet are often completely unknown to many other interested people. Country News and Views is still publishing and apparently doing well. However, back issues containing such important material as the Flatt and Scruggs discography are available only temporarily - until the supply runs out. The fact the publication comes from England also tends to limit its availability. The Disc Collectors of the early 1960's or before are even yet only a vague legend to me. Hopefully I can obtain some electronic copies or copies of copies from Japan. I think saying they were minimally and indirectly available at best would be no understatement.

We are in far worse shape with our literature than with our record supply in bluegrass. Collectors seem to speak little and then only to each other. They complain that previous attempts to produce serious magazines have failed and present approximations do poorly because of an insufficient market. They are missing the point. The noncollector, the general fan, enthusiast, the perhaps potential collector wants and needs to know. There are many publications, this Bulletin being an obvious example, that would accept articles of solid discographical, historical, and musical-sociological content. I'm referring to publications that already have an established readership of interested non-collectors. This is where the information should go; this is where the demand is; this is where it would do the most to promote the music and preserve it. Yet paradoxically the Bulletin and similar publications go begging for articles. (True they can't pay royalties but neither can the collectors' journals.) Everyone has noticed what proportions of the Bulletin I fill each month in a desperate attempt to disseminate the information which I have only recently acquired to partially satisfy my passionate interest in the subject. I feel others may be equally interested and I see no reason why they should be forced to spend so much energy or wait so long as I had to. But I do object to potential contributors sitting back content to, in essence, let a boy try to do several men's work. (continued on page 7)

THE BLUEGRASS SCENE - By Norm Carlson (continued from page 6)

Now on to other, more recent items.

The Brown County Jamboree in Beanblossom, Indiana opened its how on April 30th with Bryant Wilson and his Kentucky Ramblers. Wilson and his group have been acting as the house band at the Jamboree this season. Those reading my previous reviews know that I consider them one of the purest and most intense bluegrass outfits in existence. This time they were slightly below their usual standards, but still put on a thrilling performance. Bryant's banjo picker deserves higher praise than I've given in the past. Comments of other banjoists inform me his skill is considerably greater than this non-instrumentalist perceived. Other members of the group are Hiram Guest on Fiddle and Elmer Rooks playing the Bass. Wilson plays the Guitar.

Mat McLane, a remarkably talented and authentic old time Fiddler played one tune.

Roger Smith and the Brown County Boys were the second local band on the program. The group consisted of Roger Smith playing Fiddle, Neil Rosenberg handling the Banjo chores, Vernon McQueen with the Guitar, Osby Smith playing Mandolin and "Dude Lester" (C. D. McLure) slapping Bass. This is another unusually talented and vigorous bluegrass band. They delivered several fresh and outstanding renditions of less well known songs that pleasantly supplemented the often monotonously small Jamboree repertoire. Smith's teenaged daughter and guitarist Jack Davenport sang in guest spots on this segment.

Fiddler Shorty Sheehan and his wife Juanita were in specially good form for their usual portion of the program.

Bill Montore headlined the show with the same band as his April 2nd Brown County appearance: Doug Green playing Guitar, Lamar Grier on the Banjo, Byron Berline handling the fiddle, James William Monroe on the Bass. The unorganized and only partially effective crew of a month ago had already been transformed into the disciplined, responsive extension of the Monroe mind that the Blue Grass Boys has always been. Green now adequately filled the important instrumental and vocal role Monroe assigns his guitarists. Berline exhibited the most noticeable change. He has learned the Monroe songs and developed a feeling for bluegrass bowing while retaining the precision and clean note tradition of his national championship old time fiddler background. Grier continues to improve and grow in aggressiveness, although he still seems below the band average in that quality. James Monroe is one of the best bass players in bluegrass and is increasing his vocal importance to the unit, especially in quartet numbers. Few would have anticipated his talent two years ago.

In the second half of Monroe's show Red Allen replaced Doug Green. This veteran bluegrass artist's ability was well used on a few solos, several duets, and his excellent guitar backing.

Bill was in grand form and put on an inspired performance. Distressingly, he does seem unable to reach the highest notes of the most extreme songs he recorded in years past, but through most of his range his voice has as much power as ever. It is amazing to see what that man can do with a piece of wood and 8 strings. The common criticism of Bill's excessive solemnity had no support this time. Bill turned a yodel into a laugh at the end of Mule Skinner Blues and danced to the surprise and delight of the audience on several occasions.

Jimmie Tarlton, the recently rediscovered steel guitarist who recorded from 1927 to 1933, was in the audience. After playing two songs privately for this reviewer and several other college students, he was persuaded to come on stage for two more songs. The man of 75 with the voice of 30 came on stage with his modified Martin tuned to open G and played with an automobile wrist pin rather than a standard dobro bar. The audience gave him a tremendous and well deserved response. (continued on page 8)

THE BLUEGRASS SCENE By Norm Carlson (continued from page 7)

On May 7th the Brown County Jamboree was again motion starring Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys. The new group with Ralph, of course, playing the 5 string Banjo included Larry Sparks on Lead Guitar, Curley Ray Cline doing the Fiddle chores, and Melvin Goins playing rhythm guitar. The performance was as good as the many favorable reports I have heard. One week apart, this group does present a contrast to Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys. Everything about Monroe's work lets you know that here is the iron man of bluegrass. On the other hand, with Ralph's group you just feel here is some down home picking and singing. And in fact that is just what it is, only with an extra measure of talent and practice.

Larry Sparks is extremely devoted to the music of Carter Stanley. He does have an excellent voice but it is deeper and suited to slightly different songs or arrangements than Carter's was. No one will ever duplicate the unique quality of Carter's voice. Sparks blends well in the group's harmony and his guitar picking would be a credit to any band.

Ralph seemed subdued, as he understandably would be. He was slightly hoarse (aside from the standard joke that requires him to claim he is every show) but this did not show unless it was responsible for keeping him away from the exaggerated high loud notes he has sung in shows the last few years. Perhaps these are reflections of an ancient folk background but in my opinion their absence and the resultant closer harmony are more pleasant listening.

Curley Ray Cline and Melvin Goins are both veterans of the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers. Curley's fiddling is not only good, but well integrated and tasteful in the arrangements. Melvin, in his orange and chartreuse checkered suit, is skilled as a guitarist and a solid plus for the band on his featured solo bits.

No member of the band showed his potential until the evening show. Their varied presentation was an unusually satisfying experience highlighted by the beautiful and legendary "I'm a Man of Constant Sorrow" performed with the old arrangement similar to the Columbia recording. The addition of Bryant Wilson on Bass behind the group in the evening was another significant factor for a fuller, better sound.

Bryant and his group, plus an extra guitar player and mandolinist who could not be heard, filled the early portion of the evening show. I arrived late and heard only the end of the Bryant afternoon performance which included his teenaged son, a promising banjo player, and a young girl guitarist as guests.

On both the April 30th and the May 7th shows, Birch Monroe sang Bass on gospel songs and played old time fiddle tunes with both Bryant Wilson and the stars. Birch's dignified old time music is appealing from the first listening but grows more enjoyable with time.

The Brown County Jamboree is adding a few minor professional touches, such as a ticket window, and by the time this is published it will be broadcast live each week on the new Martinsville radio station WCBK. A major bluegrass festival is scheduled for June 24th and 25th. This will be personally organized by Bill and Birch Monroe and should prove to be one of the highest quality festivals ever held.

Until next month,

NORM CARLSON

A final Word or Two

The interview with Snuffy Jenkins, promised for this issue will have to be presented later, as it is on tape and I have not had the time to transcribe it to the written word. Next month maybe?? We'll plan that way anyway.

I think all of you may be a bit more patient with me if I tell you that I do all this work myself and I have many other tasks besides the bulletin to attend to. Labor it is to type all this up and run the offset press, assemble etc.

Till next month,

PETE RICHARDSON, Ed.

The Bluegrass Bookshelf

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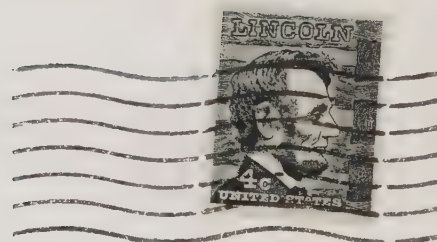
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The Bluegrass Bulletin

VOLUME NO. 2

- JULY 1967 -

No. 9



Editorial Comment

Changing the regular way of doing things in the Bluegrass Bulletin this month, I am going to print a letter we received from the Land Down Under (if you read your 4th grade geography book you will remember that this land is Australia.) And since some of the contents of that letter serves to open a very old wound, I will print it here, first, and make editorial comment after the letter ends:

The American Bluegrass Society, June 14,
Dear Sirs,

I recently saw in Sing Out magazine, your ad. I was wondering whether you'd have any objection to members in Australia? There's a large group

of us here in the city of Melbourne, Victoria who not only like, but play bluegrass. We have two professional bluegrass groups here. Bluegrass in Australia doesn't seem as strange as one may think. Our forefathers have come from a similar Anglo-European background and brought the same instruments with them...fiddle especially, in the early days. In the 1930's our country music here developed hand in fist with American country music. We didn't have any singing families like the Carters, but solo artists like Tex Morton here composed, sang, and played as well as, and in later cases, just before W.W. 2, better than many solo artists in America. Unfortunately after the war something stagnated and these old artists came to a creative halt. They are still around, doing tent shows and one night stands all over the bush (Ed. note "the bush" is a geographical term in Australia) but they haven't created anything new and, until the last 4 or 5 years, no new artists came on the scene. As a result, American Country Music a la Buck Owens, Hank Snow, complete with Nashville sound, dominated the scene here. One group stood out though, the Hawking Brothers. These boys grew up in the orcharding town of Mooroopna, about 130 miles north of Melbourne. They are regarded as among the top authorities in the world of early Carter family music. They recently recorded two bluegrass e.p.'s with their group, the Green Willow Boys. Their music is mainly the Carter and Jimmy Rogers oriented stuff they grew up on. Of course the Hawks have been recording and playing for about 15 years before returning to bluegrass. About 7 years ago, my brother Peter and I heard them play at a hotel and since then we have learned a lot of country music - especially old time from them. Peter and I both grew up in the country here - Bacchus Marsh about 30 miles west of Melbourne. While the Hawks in those days were playing commercial electric band country music, we were starting to discover a style of music on records that we had been singing in the bush as kids - "bluegrass". Once we auditioned for a TV producer who said that Peter's banjo playing, with a flat pick, was a bit loud, could he work out a softer style. Well, we went home and he sat down and worked out a finger picking style - much softer and more musical. About a week later we heard Earl Scruggs picking for the first time. Peter, who was then about 15, had picked up bluegrass banjo without having heard it before. We now have our own group, the Hayes Brothers and the Bluegrass Ramblers. We have a record contract and do a bit of TV and live work. We play a pretty wide span of Bluegrass material, but are concentrating on adapting the old Australian country songs of the 30's and 40's to bluegrass, developing them a bit further and presenting them to a wider audience. Although bluegrass itself is not part of our musical tradition here, we hope to make it so. We are able to play the country centres where there is no electricity for the twangy instruments of most country bands. We also play for city people, and although they at first regard us as a joke...hillbilly...we always end up having the last laugh. (continued on page 2)

That bluegrass music really gets them. In the band, Peter plays 5 string, Roy Taylor plays fiddle, George Harris plays guitar, Allan Pope the bass and I play mandolin and dobro. In The Hawk's group, Allan Hawking plays 5 String, Russ Hawking plays guitar, Jack Johnson the fiddle, and George Mack the mandolin. I hope this information gives you some idea of what goes on bluegrass-wise in at least one Australian capital city. There are other groups playing bluegrass in Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney, but they remain more as "spasm" groups that established bands. Here in Melbourne we have gathered a lot of bluegrass enthusiasts around us. Every Sunday, weather permitting, we congregate outside somewhere for an informal "tune" and a few beers with the Hawks and other country music fans. I'm sure most of these would be interested in your Society, as we are, and, if you are willing, we could stoke up quite a bit of membership here for you. If bluegrass is to get a voice and an army, we want to be part of it, because there is such a thing now as Australian bluegrass. Yours, /signed/ Mike Hayes.

O.K., that is the letter Bluegrassers! What are your thoughts on such fine doings. It seems to me that a lot was said by our brother in the Land Down Under that we well could listen to. Don't you detect of something a bit "pure" in that Australian Bluegrass - perhaps the type of attitude and practice we ought to be doing as a Society? - MAN - they really enjoy their Bluegrass and they actually play what they like and they don't just play for money. They get together on a Sunday evening and play bluegrass - How about that? Seems that if we can't get some name group together and promise them a gate of about a thousand people we just don't get to hear ANY bluegrass unless we get it off of wax. - WELL, this is a fine report from across the seas and the author's comments on Bluegrass being taken initially by the crowd as a JOKE by first time listeners needs comment. What our friend is saying is as much a problem here in America and Canada as in his land. Some of this problem is actually fed by the performers of Bluegrass in America. Some of the newer groups don't yet realize it, but it is certain that the long time performers know all about it. Rather than trying to do something constructive about it, they are more or less content to capitalize on the laughter of the audience which is laughing at them and not with them. This brings me to the prime point of the Editorial - BLUEGRASS IS NOT COMEDY, it is not a joke and our sterling performers in 'grass groups allow the entire show (except for the "sacred number" for which they ostentatiously remove their hats) to be taken as a half hour comedy show. Two guys crack jokes and then a real wizard on the Banjo burns it up to amaze the crowd and then it is "join us again next week" etc. UGH! For one, I believe this is directly opposed to our main purpose and goal. and our most popular performers are the culprits. What about that? Any replies? Also in the letter the mention of the same background of Anglo-european - most of you would not realize this but we did come from that part of the world. And speaking of this, did you know that the early fiddle playing and tunes was an attempt to mock the sound and music of the bagpipes? Go ahead and get mad if you wish - even swear, but it won't change the fact! And from the letter you have already read as to how the so called "scruggs style" has a way of finding natural development wherever people will play Banjo. Seems if this style is a divinely inspired natural development in all corners of the world. Boy would Tennessee or Kentucky hate to swallow that! I get all sorts of angry comments from Editorials such as this, but those who write the letters are by and large those most guilty of staking claim on the bluegrass banjo roll to their own neck of the woods or some one personality who has them in some hypnotic trance by their wizardry. To be completely logical, it is only right to assume that the same type of music and the same type of instrumental playing would develop almost anywhere. Also it seems that a lot of guys named "Pete" play banjo. Well an open answer to our friends question - YES, COME ON IN THE SOCIETY - WE WELCOME ALL WHO LOVE BLUEGRASS WHETHER IT IS IN LONG ISLAND, LOS ANGELES, KENTUCKY, OR IN AUSTRALIA. We will welcome your membership. Fees to foreign countries have to be more (\$5.00 yr) as it costs much more to mail them - Airmail is even more.

THAT SHOULD DO IT FOR THE EDITORIAL THIS MONTH
 Boy just watch the mail flow in on this one.
 Freedom of the pen - write to us anyway!

I WANT TO AGAIN THANK CAROL ANN GAWLE, CHUCK HILTON, NORM CARLSON, and DAVID TEETER for beings such very nice people to give their time and talent to write nice interesting articles for the Bulletin. The four individuals are very goodhearted people. You all owe them a vote of thanks for their labors in your behalf. - they are not paid employees in the least.

O.K. on to other things.

CAROL ANN GAWLE HAS WRITTEN SOMETHING OF GREAT INTEREST. AND IT IS SOMETHING FOR YOU TO CONSIDER DOING ALSO. Let me quote her letter: "I hope your bulletin editorials are being read thoroughly! They get better and better every issue! /The Local radio station(C/W) here WMAS deserves a salute! They have, after much prodding, started to play Bill Monroe, Don Reno, Jim and Jesse, Flatt and Scruggs, etc., etc., About time! Also have been bugging WHMP in Northampton (Mass) to put on at least a 15 minute Bluegrass program. We'll see. How about all ABS members getting out the postcards and bombarding their local stations, to play bluegrass? IT DOES WORK. It did here!" unquote ----- NICE GOING CAROL ANN THAT IS THE ONLY WAY THAT WE WILL REACH OUR COMMON GOAL OF MAKING BLUEGRASS AVAILABLE TO ALL THE PEOPLE SO THEY CAN DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THEY LIKE IT. They do have to hear it. Therefore, folks, if you will send cards (card upon card) to your local stations they will turn to and spin more of it.

ON TO OTHER THINGS. BOY, AM I EVER GLAD TO HEAR WHEN BLUEGRASS IS BRANCHING OUT IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS PRESENTED AND WHEN IT IS FORMING MORE AND MORE FAN GROUPS. I have had just such word - news - from our good friend Ron Slaughter in California. He enclosed an announcement for their first Annual Bluegrass festival. The Festival will be used to "kick off" the formation of the BLUEGRASS SOCIETY FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA". At present time the invitations have been sent out to 20 Bluegrass groups and 10 have signed up so far including THE DILLARDS. They will have literature (including some past issues of the Bulletin) at the door for those who are interested. If you are in the neighborhood, or if you can go out of your way to be in the neighborhood you should visit THE VILLAGE INN at 4327 Candlewood Blvd. Lakewood California. The Village Inn will have entertainment 6 nights a week and they will feature BLUEGRASS. Drop in and have a Pizza a^o la Bluegrass (that is a Pizza with Banjo). We are more than happy to give this bit of publicity and this is the type of thing which we want to print. How about other areas? Are any of your local establishments playing Bluegrass while you have your shoes resoled or anything like that???

WE HAVE MOVED HERE IS THE NEW ADDRESS

IMPORTANT

THE BLUEGRASS BOOKSHELF
726 S. W. 14th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33135
Telephone : AREA CODE: 305 - 374-7866

PLEASE CHANGE THE ADDRESS YOU HAVE FOR THE BOOKSHELF, THE SOCIETY OR THE BULLETIN TO THE ADDRESS GIVEN ABOVE. Send nothing to Seffner, there isn't anyone there!

— PLEASE! —

O.K. HERE ARE YOUR SPECIALS FOR THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER. The next bulletin will be in September.

- DOBRO STEELS \$1.00 \$1.25 + \$2.50 *price 1/4 off.*
— BANJO STRAPS, WOVEN WITH DESIGN \$4.00 VERY NICE. — FRET SAWS \$3.50 ea.
— CADD FOR ALL 5 STRINGS ABOVE 5th FRET, SET THUMB SCREW TYPE \$3.00
— WALL MOUNT FOR GUITAR, BANJO OR MANOOLIN \$1.25 ea. BOOKS — BANJO MECHANIC \$5.00
— TERRY BRYON MANUAL FOR RAPPING — FRAILING FOLK BANJO \$4.00
— TERRY BRYON TAB BOOK (RAPPING — FRAILING BANJO TABS) TEN TUNES \$2.50
— ROBIN SCOTT'S GUITAR MANUAL — BY EAR — \$4.00
— KEITH TYLER'S "LEARN DOBRO BY EAR" — \$4.00.

IT IS MORE THAN RIGHT TIME FOR ME TO TALK ABOUT YOUR BULLETIN. I have served as the most spoken voice in the Society for more time than should allowed, but alas, you have not done your job as you should so it has fallen to me to do your work.

I have had the very able assistance of Chuck Hilton, Carol Ann Gawle, Dave Teeter and for the most part our able correspondent Norm Carlson. These have done spartan service for the Bulletin and they have, along with myself, provided you with your bulletin content.

Time has come for all of you to "turn to" and "get with it". It is your bulletin, it is not mine. The Society does not belong to me, al though I belong as a member to it. Therefore it is very meet and right that we should from hence forward expect your reports and your observations to compose the content of the Bulletin in the future. I will continue to make editorial comment as an editor should, but the bulk of the content is to you to decide, and to supply.

WHAT WE WILL NOT PRINT - We will not print argumentative or quarrelsome letters. I have to say this for I receive a lot of this type of mail. A member sends in a column or article and some of you think it is for you to pick apart and complain about. I will not include any such material in the bulletin, for it serves no useful purpose except perhaps to make the writer, already frustrated seemingly, aire the nonsense of his psyche in the wrong direction. The Society is not for you to complain about how someone writes. We are not professionals in all areas of our interest, we are just people, plain and simple, who seek to share with each other what we can.

Some months ago I indicated that printing the names and addresses of members in the bulletin was not too good an idea. The reason was that one particular member took advantage of a mailing list that he had in his possession of about 35 or 40 names, to try to tear down the society plank by plank. There was no reason for this at all, just that he is so very sick that he must be putting people at odds with others in order to be, himself, happy. I want to safeguard the society from such nonsense and lunacy in the future. We have, at the Bookshelf, a mailing list of almost a thousand names and I would not, for anything, give out those names and addresses to such irresponsible people who need psychiatric help. I nipped all that in the bud that time with only a few people being involved. All the hate literature has been sown with that small number and no more will get a chance to go out to our mailing list. If you were among the number that received correspondence from a previous member and officer(very poorly chosen) I apologize for him for he has no way of apologizing for himself. We here at the Bookshelf are very amiable and congenial people. We have given much material to people who couldn't afford it. We have extended credit to people who did not pay us. And the individual who I speak about now presently owes the Bookshelf in excess of \$300 and rather than act responsibly and pay it, he has sought to do us harm by writing to others in the society. Well, I cannot retract what one has already done, but I hope that you will decide on the basis of how you have been treated as to whether we do, indeed, give a rather good discount on most everything.

Therefore, we will print anything that yo u write to us if it is fit to print and so long as it is congenial and friendly. In to the trash box with hate literature. If you have the feeling that you must argue or quarrell, I suggest that you seek out a competent Psychiatrist and work out those things there, and not with fellow members through the bulletin. As soon as your letter gets into angry words I throw it into the trash box and don't even finish it. There is enough ill feeling in the world without sharing yours with us. Share with us your happiness.

I HATE TO REPORT THIS MONTH THAT WE WILL HAVE TO CUT OUR PRODUCTION TO EVERY OTHER MONTH BECUASE YOU DO NOT PROVIDE US WITH ENOUGH MATERIAL TO PRINT. I have, for too long, made up the rest, now I will wait for your material. THE SOCIETY AND THE BULLETIN IS FOR YOU AND NOT FOR ME OR ANY INDIVIDUAL. The Bookshelf prints the Bulletin but we will not stand responsible for each and every article that needs to be printed. And don't bother sending us material printed elsewhere. We are not echos. Also, don't think the editorial staff is so naive that we do not recognize quotes (in bulk) from the back of record albums. That is not original articles or reports - lets us be original with what we send in. ONE MORE TIME - IT IS YOUR BULLETIN TO FILL. I will no longer accept the responsiblility-I don't have the time!

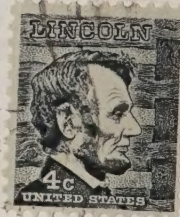
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The Bluegrass Bookshelf
726 S. W. 14th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33135

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